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Bp. SHERLOCK's

DISCOURSES.

VOL. V.



DISCOURSES  
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SEVERAL OCCASIONS  
By SHERLOCK

DISCOURSES

LATE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON  
MARTIN DE TROYES

VOL. V

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# DISCOURSES

PREACHED ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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By the Right Reverend Father in God,

THOMAS SHERLOCK, D.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON,

AND

MASTER OF THE TEMPLE.

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VOL. V.

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By the Right Reverend Father in God,

CMC

MUSEUM  
BRITANNICUM

D. THOMAS SHERRILL

TO THE READER.

TO THE

READER.

**THESE** Sermons, preached on important Occasions, were separately published by their excellent Author, the late Bishop of *London*, **Dr. THOMAS SHERLOCK.**

The judicious Reader will discover in them the same Energy of Sentiment and Purity of Diction, the same pious Intention to promote Virtue and true Religion, the same pathetic and convincing Ad-



dress to the Heart, which so eminently distinguish the rest of this Prelate's Discourses.

Dr. SHERLOCK no sooner appeared in the great World, than he gave evident Proofs of the Extent of his Learning and the Superiority of his Genius. It has been Matter of Doubt with some good Judges of Style, whether the first of these Sermons, which he preached above seventy Years since, when a young Man, has been excelled, either in Language or Matter, by any that he delivered from the Pulpit afterwards.

There is not, perhaps, a more difficult Task, than the doing Justice

tice to a great and exalted Character. We shall not, therefore, presume to draw a Portrait of Bishop SHERLOCK; but will just observe, that his Views, both in civil and religious Matters, were always large and comprehensive, not confined to the narrow Systems of particular Parties, nor subjected to the fluctuating Principles of powerful and interested Men: that he was a most strenuous and able Defender of the great Truths of our holy Religion: that he made it his constant Practice to inculcate the christian and social Virtues; to enforce a due and ready Submission to the Laws; to inspire Prince and People with a Sense of their respective Duties, and to discountenance all tempo-

rary

rary Changes and hasty Innovations  
in Church and State.

The Re-publication of these Dis-  
courses has been so long and ear-  
nestly wished for, that we cannot  
doubt of their Acceptance with the  
Public, as the *Fifth* and last Vo-  
lume of Bishop SHERLOCK's Ser-  
mons.

1775.

D.D.

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shall receive a righteous Man's Reward.  
And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of  
these*



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## DISCOURSE I.

PROV. XXIV. 21.

*My Son, Fear thou the Lord and the King;  
and meddle not with them that are given  
to change.*

**T**HE Fear of God, and of the King,  
are joined together in Scripture, to  
shew the Dependence one has upon the  
other. The only lasting Foundation of civil  
Obedience, is the Fear of God; and the  
truest Interest of Princes, is to maintain the  
Honour of Religion, by which they secure  
their own. The Advantage of Religion to  
all public Societies and civil Governments,  
is so plain and visible, that some have sus-  
pected it to be the only End of Religion;  
which they allow to be an excellent Con-  
trivance of State, a proper Remedy for the  
B turbulent



turbulent Humours and Passions of Men. And though we acknowledge nobler and better Ends of Religion, which respect another world; yet we must, with Thankfulness to its Divine Author, own it to be excellently adapted to the temporal Felicity of private Men, and public Societies; *Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but Sin is the Reproach of any People.*

If we look into the History of former Times, we shall find the first Symptoms of Ruin and Destruction have appeared in the dissolute Lives of the People, and a general Contempt of sacred Things. Irreligion naturally tends to Disorder and Confusion; for all civil and moral Duties are founded in the Principles of Religion; which once overthrown, nothing remains but pure Force and Power, to restrain the unruly Appetites of Men: a Way of governing neither safe to the Prince, nor easy to the People; and therefore can never last long. Duties, which flow from fixed and settled Principles, must always be the same; the Obligation arising from them unalterable; from the Practice of which, will follow Order and Regularity. But Interest and Passion are in continual Motion, and liable

to

## DISCOURSE I. 3

to infinite Changes; and Men who steer by them, can hold no steady Course of Action, but must be *given to change*, as often as they are out of Humour, or think the present State of Things not proper to serve their Turn. Therefore nothing but a religious Sense of our Duty to God, and to our Governors, his Ministers on Earth, can keep us constant and upright in our Obedience. *Fear God and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change.*

I shall not consider the Duty of fearing God, any farther than as the Obedience due to our Superiors on Earth is included in it; and shall therefore confine myself to the following Particulars; To consider,

*First*, What Obedience to our Governors is enjoined by the Law of God.

*Secondly*, How inconsistent with this Obedience the Practice of those men is, who *are given to change*.

*First*, What Obedience to our Governors is enjoined by the Law of God.

Obedience is seen chiefly in three Things:

*1<sup>st</sup>*, In Submission to the Laws and Commands of our Princes.

*2<sup>dly</sup>*, In Honour and Reverence to their Persons and Government.

3dly. In defending them, when any Danger threatens them or the Public.

The first and principal Instance of Obedience, is Submission to the Laws and Commands of our Princes. To determine the Original of civil Power, or how the Prince's Right to the Obedience of the Subject first began, is neither easy, nor at this Time necessary. But whatever the Original of Government has been, or upon what Account soever lawful Authority has been gained; upon the same, Obedience becomes due. At the Time our Saviour appeared in the World, various were the Forms of Government in it, and different the Degrees of Power that were exercised by Rulers over different Countries; none of which were either lessened or increased by the divine Law, but all pronounced to be the Ordinance of God; and Obedience to all exacted under the Penalty of disobeying God, the Original of all Power and Authority. *For he that resisteth, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation.*

But since the Nature of Obedience is nowhere determined by the Law of God, but only the Practice of it commanded; some other



## DISCOURSE I.

5

other Rule there must be, to judge of the Extent of our Duty. As in moral Virtues, the Light of Nature and right Reason inform us what is Temperance, Sobriety, and the like; and therefore these Virtues are commanded in Scripture, and, in most Cases, Men left to their natural Notions of Good and Evil, to distinguish between the Virtue and the Vice; so likewise must the Acts of Obedience, which the Law of God commands, be explained and defined by some other Rule. When the *Jews* put that captious Question to our Saviour, *Whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, or no*; he gave no new Directions, but judged them out of their own Mouths by the known Rules of Government: for they having owned the Coin of the Country to bear *Cæsar's* Image and Superscription, a manifest Token of *their* Subjection and *his* Sovereignty; he determined, *Render therefore unto Cæsar the Things which are Cæsar's*: Agreeable to which is the Apostle's Rule, *Tribute to whom Tribute is due*. Our Saviour took it not upon him to determine the civil Right of *Cæsar*; but the Right appearing, Obedience and Compliance he commanded. The Rights of Princes are not determined



in Scripture; and therefore in Questions of Right, the Scripture is no Rule.

The Measure then of Power and Authority must be the Rule of Obedience: whatever the Prince can lawfully command, the Subject is bound to obey. The *things which are God's must be rendered unto God*; and therefore no divine Law, declared either by the clear Light of Nature, or express Revelation, can be superseded by the Command of any earthly Power. Which, whenever it is the Case, we must obey God rather than Man; and be content with the Lot of them who suffer for Well-doing. To reason abstractedly upon the Power of Princes, is a Sign of Weakness, as well as of a troublesome Temper. Custom, and the Law of the Land in each Country, are in this Case the highest Reason; under which Regulations, the Power of all Princes is lawful and reasonable. Were it otherwise, the Gospel, which was intended for the Law of all Nations and People, could not have commanded Obedience to the present Powers, which were in Form and Authority vastly different.

All Obedience is primarily owing to God, the Fountain of all Power: and should it please him to take upon himself  
the

## DISCOURSE I.

7

the personal Government of Nations; as he did sometime of the People of the *Jews*; all other Power would cease of course. In the *Jewish* Government, the Laws of civil and ecclesiastical Polity were Divine; being established by God, when he took upon himself the external Government of that People. But where God did not so visibly interest himself, but committed the Reins of Government to earthly Princes; the making Laws for the external and visible Order of the World was remitted to their Authority. And therefore the Gospel, though infinitely more perfect than the Law, gave us no System of Laws, either for civil or ecclesiastical Government: which under the Law were ordained by God (not as supreme Governor of the World, but as the immediate and visible Governor of the *Jews*); but under the Gospel, are left to Princes, who are appointed by God to be the visible Governors of the World; and therefore all visible and external Order is their proper Care and Business. Of *Obedience* there are two Parts; the external, and internal. The external consists in the outward Conformity of our Actions to the Rules and Principles of Virtue; the internal, in

## 8 DISCOURSE I.

the Sincerity and Purity of the Heart. The Government of the World is not concerned in the internal Part; for if Men act as if they were honest, the Peace and outward Order of the World will be secured, though their Hearts are perverse; and therefore, the Judgment of this, God, as he alone is able for it, has reserved to himself. The external Part of *Obedience* is that, in the due Performance of which the Beauty and Order of the World consists; and therefore this is the proper Care of the Governors of the World. The same holds in Religion, which is the Service of God: there are Duties which none are concerned in, but God and our own Souls; such as Faith, Repentance, and the like; the Virtue of which is internal, of the Heart. But God requires likewise an external and visible Worship from us, in which outward Order and Decency are *required*, but not *determined*, and therefore must be left to their Jurisdiction, to whom we are answerable for our outward Behaviour in all Things. How far mistaken then is the Zeal of those, who decline submitting to the Orders of the Church, because they are of human Appointment! Whereas being ordained by a  
lawful



## DISCOURSE I. 9

lawful Power, they have so far the Stamp of Divine Authority, as to make Disobedience to them a Sin against God.

The second Instance of Obedience, is to honour and reverence our Governors; to think with Respect, and speak with Decency of their Persons and Governments. This Duty we owe to all our Superiors, in proportion to their Dignity and Office. If we look up to the Fountain and Original of all Power, the Supreme Governor of the World; his *Name, even to mention in vain, shall not be held guiltless.* Next to him, though the Distance be great, are the supreme Powers on Earth; to whom we owe the greatest *civil* Respect and Reverence; according to the Apostle's Rule, to *render Honour, to whom Honour; Fear, to whom Fear* is due: whose Names or Persons to treat with Contempt, is Want of Decency, as well as Duty. Two Things have a Right to Honour and Respect; personal Virtues, and public Characters; which when happily joined together, are to be accounted *worthy of double Honour*: but when separate, are not to be defrauded of their due Portion. When *St Paul*, provoked by the unjust Usage of the High-priest, returned him a  
rude



## 10 DISCOURSE I.

rude Answer ; being informed what Place he held in the Commonwealth, he corrected, and excused his Error ; *I wist not, Brethren, that he was the High-priest : for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy People.*

The third Instance of Obedience, is in defending the Persons and Government of our Princes.

Mutual Defence is the End of all Government. Protection in Life and Fortune, is the Right of every Subject : which, as he may lawfully expect from his Prince ; so is he bound to him, in the like Duty of defending his Person and Government, whenever Occasion requires. When Men entered into civil Society, they resigned all their private Right and Interest, even in their own Lives, to the public Good : and therefore the public Happiness is to be preferred before our own ; the Life of the Public, which consists in maintaining the established Form of Government, to be supported, though with the Loss of our own. The Prince bears the Person of the Commonwealth ; by him the Public lives and acts ; therefore is his Life sacred : which *but* coldly to defend is Want of Affection to the Public,

## DISCOURSE I. 11

lic, and Treason against the original Laws of all Government. And if the sense of Honour be not mightily changed, to die for our Prince or our Country, is to fall with Glory, and challenges Respect to our Memory from all Posterity.

To maintain the established Form of Government, is the first and highest Duty of Men acting in Society. To remove the ancient Land-marks of Power and Obedience, tends to the utter Ruin and Destruction of all Government; and is an Injury to the Prince, as well as Disobedience to his Power; who acquires a personal Right and Interest in the Privileges descending with the Crown. But this will more properly fall under the second Head; which was to consider,

How inconsistent with Obedience required, the Practice of those Men is, *who are given to change.*

No Government was ever so perfectly formed at first, as to answer all Occasions: the Wisdom of Man not reaching far enough to view all the possible Variety of Circumstances, that may require the mitigating, or increasing the Severity of old Laws; or the making new. Therefore it is

is necessary for the public Good, that there should be a Power lodged somewhere, to adapt old Laws to the present Circumstances, or those which may hereafter arise. Thus to change, is an Act of lawful Power; and therefore falls not within the Charge of the Text, *Not to meddle with them that are given to change.*

But then the most beneficial and necessary Changes must be begun, promoted, and perfected by lawful Authority; or else they lose their good Quality, and, like wholesome Remedies unduly applied, prey upon the Vitals of the Government. For no Change can be so beneficial in its Consequence, as usurping upon lawful Authority is destructive; and therefore it becomes a good Subject to bear any Inconvenience arising from the present Constitution, rather than, by too precipitately throwing it off, to prevent the regular Methods of Alteration. To pretend public Good, is common to all Factions and Parties; and therefore can excuse none: and where the Pretence is real; yet to seek public Good, in Opposition to public Authority, is like curing Distempers by destroying the Patient.

To view with Pleasure the Factions and Disturb.



## DISCOURSE I. 13

Disturbances of a Kingdom; and, like the Lame and Impotent at the Pool of *Bethesda*, to long for the troubling of the Waters, that we may first step in, and make some private Advantage of the public Calamities, is neither the Part of a good Man, or a good Christian.

To encourage the seditious Principles and Practices of others; though cunning Men may do it without Danger, yet they can never do it without Guilt.

These Practices need not be brought near, to be compared with the Duty of Obedience. They appear at first Sight to have nothing less in them than Honour and Reverence, or Obedience to the Prince.

The Authority of the Prince is as much concerned in maintaining the Honour and Order of God's Service, as of his own: and the noblest Character that belongs to Princes, is, that of *nursing Fathers and Mothers* to the Church of Christ; the Peace and Order of which is at once the Splendor and Security of a Government: and therefore the Advice of the Text, *Not to meddle with them who are given to change*, must be extended to the Government of the Church, as well as of the State. And the Occasion  
of



of this Solemnity gives but too much Reason for this Application; the Alterations intended and practised upon the Church, influencing not a little in the barbarous Treason which we this Day lament.

There must in the Church, as in the State, be a Power to change whatever, through Use and Experience, appears unfit for the End it was designed. To propose and procure Amendments to the Laws of the Church, when there is Occasion for it, is their Duty in whose Hands the Power is lodged; and Changes so effected, can never be to the Blemish or Dishonour of the Church. But when Men dislike without Reason, and obstinately condemn whatever has been settled by Authority; when they disclaim the Power and all the Acts of the Church; either their Ignorance must be invincible, or their Guilt unpardonable.

The Reason of all Changes ought to be very plain and apparent; lest Lightness and Wantonness, in altering old Laws, bring Power and Authority into Contempt. To change is the Effect, and the Sign of Weakness: and therefore it is the Character of the most perfect Being, that in him is no *Variableness, or Shadow of turning.*

*Often*

## DISCOURSE I. 15

*Often* to change, will *always* breed Contempt: and therefore, in private Life, wise Men choose rather to bear some Inconveniencies arising from the Way they are settled in, than, by shifting from one Course to another, to gain little but the Character of Unsteadiness, and Want of Resolution. Much less should public Bodies hazard their Credit by unnecessary Changes; and, for the Sake of removing one unpolished Stone, endanger the whole Building; which how it will settle on a new Foundation, the Wisdom of Man cannot foresee. Some Inconveniencies in the Establishment of public Societies, like some Distempers in the Body, are borne with less Danger than they are cured.

To plead for Alterations of seemingly greater Purity and Perfection, carries with it such an Appearance of Goodness and Concern for the Service of God, as will never fail to engage the Favour of the Multitude; who always make up in Zeal what they want in Knowledge; which is, and will be a Temptation to Men, who are incapable of a better, to take this Way to raise themselves in the Esteem of the People.

To press for Alterations when most Things

## 16 DISCOURSE I.

Things in the present Establishment are owned to be good, and all tolerable, is not the Effect of much Judgment. If Want of Perfection be a Reason to change, it will be a Reason for ever; for since all the Laws of the Church are not of divine Institution, they have too great a Mixture of Weakness in their Original, ever to be perfect in themselves. And should all the Changes desired, be granted, let not Men imagine that the next Age will be so unlike this, as not to find Fault with the Orders of their Superiors.

It is unaccountable in Reason, that, in Matters of religious Government, every Man thinks himself judge of what is decent and convenient, and what fit to be obeyed; whereas in Matters of civil Government, whatever they act, they dare not pretend to the same discretionary Power: as if the Case were not the same in both; and Obedience in all Things lawful and honest, (further than which, no Man's private Judgment extends) in both of like Necessity.

How the common People are led into the Esteem of Men thus acting, is not hard to say. To suffer for one's Opinion, right

or



## DISCOURSE I. 17

or wrong, is in the Eyes of the Vulgar meritorious : and since some outward Advantages are forfeited, by not complying with the present Establishment ; should Men, even for worldly Interest, and Want of Merit sufficient to rise in the lawful and regular Way, strike out new Paths for themselves ; yet they shall be sure, among their Followers, to have the Character of honest Men, Men suffering for Conscience sake. And though there be no Suffering in the Case ; no Punishment attending upon such Practices ; yet whilst Rewards are open to the Obedience of others, the partiality of Men will make them apter to repine at the Distinction, than to be thankful for the Impunity.

As long as Men are weak enough to be misled ; and the Errors of some are profitable to others ; there will be no End of Dissensions : and should the Restlessness and Importunity of Men once break in upon the Constitution, the Event could only shew where it would end.

To what Extremes the Humour of Men once set on changing will run, the mournful Occasion of this Day's Meeting is too sensible a Proof. The Actors in the late

C

Trou-



## 18 DISCOURSE I.

Troubles thought of nothing less, when they began, than the Event that succeeded. The Good of the Public, and of the King, was the Pretence; and they never left seeking it, till they had ruined the Public, and laid *His Royal Head* low. With the same good Success, the Purity of the Church was promoted; which ended in utter Subversion, and the Blood of a great Prelate.

Great indeed in many Respects; but he sunk under the Iniquity of the Times, by endeavouring to give Life to the long-forgotten and neglected Discipline of the Church; when the Liberty and Licentiousness of the Age could bear nothing less. The Reformation had given such a Turn to weak Heads, that had not Weight enough to poise themselves between the Extremes of Popery and Fanaticism; that every thing older than Yesterday was looked upon to be Popish and Antichristian: the meanest of the People aspired to the Priesthood; and were readier to frame new Laws for the Church, than obey the old. This led him to some Acts of great Severity, that he might create an Authority, and Reverence for the Laws, when it should appear they had not quite lost their Edge. Thus he  
became

## DISCOURSE I. 19

became too generally hated, and fall he must; for his Faults were great, and, as the Times went, unpardonable; he loved the *Church* and the *King*.

His Case might deserve more to be lamented, did not that which followed, bury all private Injuries and Resentments; in respect of which, the former *Cruelties were tender Mercies*. The Thirst of Blood was too great, to be satisfied with the Fall of private Men; nor could the new Schemes of Confusion take place, till the Fountain of lawful Power and Authority was dried up. Every Man had a Project of his own for a new Government; and rather than be disappointed, they resolved to lay the Foundation in royal Blood.

Could all the Obligations of Nature and Religion have prevailed, the King might have lived to make his People happy; but the Misfortune was, they had injured him too much, to trust him even with his own Life; nor could their Consciences give them Security for the Mischiefs already done, but in going on still to add Murder and Parricide, and in destroying the Power, they had too much Reason to fear. A barbarous Cruelty! of which it is hard to say, whe-

## 20 DISCOURSE I.

ther the Malice and Wickedness, with which it was acted, were greater; or the Patience and Magnanimity, with which it was borne. As if the Contest had been, whether human Nature were capable of greater Degrees of Virtue, or Vice.

View the King from the Throne to the Scaffold; and he was in his Life the Pattern of a good Prince; in his Death, of a good Christian. He was a Prince, who, from the Sweetness of his Temper, the Integrity of his Intentions, and a kind and tender Concern for the meanest of his Subjects, might well have expected to make his Name dear to this Nation, and his Memory glorious, upon a better Account than the History of this Day affords. He was formed by Nature and Grace to be an Ornament of better Times; and wanted nothing to make him great in the worst, those he lived in, but a just Resentment of the Indignities he suffered. The only Prerogative his Enemies had left him, was to forgive the Injuries they did him; which he exercised to the last; and, in the Heat of a merciless Rebellion, could never forget his Enemies were his Subjects, when they had long since forgot him to be their King; which was  
too



## DISCOURSE I. 21

too great a Bias upon the Minds of indifferent Men, when they saw the only Way to escape being punished, was to take the Course that deserved it.

They, who consider the happy and envied Condition of our Government, in which are equally secured, the Dignity of the Prince, and Liberty of the Subject; the Blessing of a Church established in primitive Purity, wherein the Honour of Religion and God's Service is maintained without Superstition; Obedience taught without Blindness; can never sufficiently reverence the Memory of a Prince, who chose rather to lay down his Crown and his Life, than not deliver down these Blessings inviolable to Posterity. They, who remember him, without any partial Affection, must allow him the Character of a noble and generous Prince, and Father of his Country. They, who think with Envy, and speak with Malice, of him, can say no worse, than, *He was a Man of like Passions with us.* And surely they forget themselves to be Men, who would have our common Infirmities remembered to *his* Dishonour.

The Case is hard, if Princes have no Right to the Allowances made to all besides: harder, because, by their high Station, they



are more exposed to the View of the World; and few there are so modest, as not to think themselves wise enough to judge of their Actions. Private Persons have their Inclinations free from all Checks and Restraints, more than Innocence and Religion require: their Rule is, to preserve Integrity, and it will preserve them. But Men of Character have this further Care, *That their God be not evil spoken of*: a Lesson of infinitely more Difficulty, and greater Toil, by how much harder it is to please *Men* than *God*. To seek the good Opinion of the People, is Prudence in Men of public Characters: but is there a greater Slavery under the Sun, than to be obliged to live by the Opinion of those, who are neither wise enough to judge, nor to let it alone?

The Privilege that extends to the meanest Cottage, to choose their own Friends and Companions, is not without murmuring allowed to Kings: nor will it be permitted to the Dignity of some Characters, and Majesty of others, to stoop even to the innocent and harmless Enjoyments of Life: as if Princes and great Ministers had no *private* Cares; but were capable of the constant Thoughts of public Business, and Religion. Every

Step

## DISCOURSE I. 23

Step Men take, by which they rise into the View of the World, is an Abridgement of their innocent Liberty, and binds them to a stricter and feverer Self-denial. For there is a natural Envy in Men, which loves to see the Honour and Dignity of great Places, qualified with Trouble and Anxiety.

But Men who are distinguished by the Advantages of Birth and Education, should be above the common Prejudices and sordid Passions of the Vulgar; and think themselves obliged, in Honour as well as Duty, to pay a steady and regular Obedience to the Government. It is some Excuse for the Dishonour of the Nation, in the late Rebellion, that we can shew so brave a List of Nobility and Gentry, who fell in Defence of their King; and left the Honour of their Death, a nobler Inheritance to their Families, than their Lands and Estates. The Imitation of their Virtue and Obedience need not to be pressed in *this* Audience; where the Rules of Duty and Honour are better practised, than they can be taught. The noble Families have Examples of their own, to instruct them how *they* should behave themselves to their Prince and their Country: and in the History of their Ancestors,

may learn, that *Loyalty to the Crown*, is the first and the noblest Title of Honour. And surely thus much Good we may expect from the Evil of the late Times; that Men would learn at length to value the Blessing of a good Prince.

It is the Goodness of God to us, that, after so many Convulsions, we still enjoy our ancient Government; that there is still Life and Vigour in the Religion and Liberty of *England*: a Goodness that on our Part requires the utmost Returns of Gratitude; which can no way be so acceptably shewn, as in the worthy Use of the Blessings we enjoy. We shall but ill perform the Duty of this Day, unless we amend in ourselves the Errors we reprove in others. The *Crown* and the *Virtues* of the royal Martyr are once more joined together; let not then our Reproach be renewed by the repeated Want of Obedience and Affection. If, whilst our Governors watch with Care and Solitude, to make us easy and happy in ourselves; strong and secure against our Enemies abroad; we labour to disturb the Methods of our Government at Home; we must thank ourselves for the Evils, which will always follow from the turbulent Humours, and distracted Counsels



## DISCOURSE I. 25

fels of a Nation. We have an *Enemy* strong and cunning to deal with; an ancient *Rival* of the Power and Honour of *England*; an *Enemy* to the *Religion* of Protestants, and the *Liberty* of Mankind: and if nothing else will, yet Interest would prevail with us to unite for our mutual Safety; and whilst our brave Countrymen expose their Lives to the Hazard and Fortune of War *Abroad*, in Defence of their Prince, and their Country; methinks the least that can be expected of us, is to be quiet and peaceable at *Home*. To save the sinking Liberties of *Europe*, is worthy a *Queen* of *England*; and if the Spirit of our Fathers be not degenerate in us, it will, it must rise to check the Progress of an ambitious Monarch; and it will ever be the Choice of an *Englishman*, rather to die by his *Sword*, than live by his *Law*: but our *Lives* and *Fortunes* are safe in the Conduct and Prudence of our *Governors*; we need only sacrifice our *ill Humours*, to the Peace and Security of our Country; and be content to *stand still and see the Salvation of the Lord*. Let us at least be *willing* to be saved; and, for the Sake and Defence of our Religion, submit to live by the Rules of it. We have been long  
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fighting and contending for our Religion ;  
it is now high Time to practise it ; and a  
better Foundation we cannot lay than in the  
Duties of the Text, *To fear the Lord, and  
the King, and not to meddle with them that  
are given to change.*

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## DISCOURSE II.

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MATTHEW X. 41, 42.

*He that receiveth a Prophet, in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward: And he that receiveth a righteous Man, in the Name of a righteous Man, shall receive a righteous Man's Reward.*

*And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little Ones, a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his Reward.*

**T**OWARDS the Beginning of this Chapter we read, that our Saviour sent forth his Disciples to preach the Kingdom of God. That they might preach with Authority, he endowed them with Power from  
above,

## 28 DISCOURSE II.

above, and with the manifold Gifts of the Spirit. That they might attend upon their Ministry without Distraction, he eased them of the Care of providing for themselves; and gave them Power to demand and receive of those under their Instruction, whatever their Wants required. *Provide*, says he, *neither Gold, nor Silver, nor Brass in your Purses; nor Scrip for your Journey, neither two Coats, neither Shoes, nor yet Staves; for the Workman is worthy of his Meat*, v. 9, 10. Or as St. Luke expresses it, *The Labourer is worthy of his Hire*, ch. x. 7. This Reason shews the true Sense of the Precept; that it was not meant to take from them the Necessaries and Conveniences of Life, or to make Poverty a Part of their Profession; but only to discharge them of the Care and Solitude of providing for themselves; for they had a Right to be provided for, by those whom they served in the Gospel: *For the Labourer is worthy of his Hire*.

And this further appears to be the Sense of this Precept in *Luke xxii. 35*. *And he said unto them, When I sent you without Purse, and Scrip, and Shoes, lacked ye any Thing? And they said, Nothing*. Had it been

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## DISCOURSE II. 29

been his Intent to make Poverty a necessary Qualification for the Ministry, he would not have asked this Question, or received this Answer. But so little did he intend it, that his Care supplied the Want of theirs throughout their Journey, and enlarged the Hearts of the People towards them: so that their Poverty was turned into Plenty; and they preached the Gospel, without the Incumbrance of worldly Cares, *as having Nothing, and yet possessing all Things.*

As the Office of preaching the Gospel was to be perpetual in the Christian Church, so this Right of Maintenance was for ever to attend it; for the *Lord ordained*, as St. Paul tells us, *that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel*, 1 Cor. ix. 14. A Right on one Side infers a Duty on the other: if the Ministers of the Gospel have a Right to be provided for, it is the Duty of the Faithful to provide for them; but the Proportion of this Maintenance being no where determined, but Men left to give as their Circumstances enable them, and as their Love and Honour for the Ministry incline them; what is given upon this Account, comes to be considered as a Charity freely offered, rather than as a Debt duly discharged:



## 30 DISCOURSE II.

discharged: and as such, our Saviour has promised to accept and reward it. And since in this Kind of Charity the Honour of his Name, and the promoting his Religion, are most immediately consulted, he has distinguished it from all others by a more honourable and glorious Reward; *He that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward, &c.* John xi. 12.

To *receive a Prophet*, sometimes signifies to receive his Doctrine, and to become his Follower or Disciple; but in this Place it cannot signify so, for these two Reasons:

First, Our Saviour himself distinguishes this Reception of a Prophet from the other Reception, which is obeying and hearkening to his Voice, in the 14th Verse: *Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your Words; when you depart out of that House, or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet.* Had the same Thing been intended by *receiving* and *hearing* a Prophet, the Words would have been thus connected: *Whosoever shall not receive you, and hear your Words; but the disjunctive Particle nor, shews that they are here spoken of as different Things.* The 11th Verse, compared with this 14th, will determine

## DISCOURSE II. 31

determine what is meant in this Place by receiving a Prophet: *Into whatsoever City or Town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence,* v. 11. In the 14th it follows, *Whosoever shall not receive you, &c.* that is, to *abide* with them; which Abode implies, not only House-room, but a Supply of such other Necessaries as their Circumstances required; for it was to answer the Want of Gold and Silver, and such other Things as they were expressly forbidden to provide for themselves.

The second Reason may be collected from the last Verse of the Text: *And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little Ones, a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Disciple; verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his Reward.* It is manifest that our Saviour here speaks of giving a *Cup of cold Water only*, as the lowest Degree of that Virtue which he was then recommending; for to shew how acceptable an Offering it would be to God, to receive a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, he adds, that even a Cup of cold Water given in the Name of a Disciple, should not lose its Reward. To receive a Prophet, therefore, and  
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## 32 DISCOURSE II.

to give a Cup of cold Water to a Disciple, are Acts of the same Kind, though differing in Degree; and consequently to receive a Prophet in this Place, is not an Act of Faith or Obedience, but of Charity and Beneficence.

*To receive a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet*, is to receive him because he is a Prophet; upon Account of his Character and Office, and near Relation which he bears to Christ. To be kind to our Friends and Relations, and to administer Relief to the extreme Necessities and Sufferings of our Fellow-Creatures, is, in some Degree, to comply with the Cravings of Nature in ourselves, and to provide for our own Ease and Enjoyment: for the Pity and Compassion, which miserable Objects raise in us, are attended with a Pain and Uneasiness to ourselves, no otherwise to be allayed, but by relieving the Misery that caused them. But when we relieve the Members of Christ, because of the Relation they bear to him, we act then in the Spirit of true Christian Charity; and shew ourselves to be lively Parts of his Body: *Rejoicing with them that do rejoice*, and suffering with those who suffer.

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## DISCOURSE II. 33

The Excellency of Christian Charity is derived from this Dignity of its Object. In Morality we can rise no higher than to consider Men as Men, as Partakers of the same common Nature with ourselves; and the natural Sense we have of Misery, is the Foundation of our Tenderness and Compassion towards others. In this Case, the Regard we have for others is derived from ourselves; and our Love and Compassion bear a Proportion to the Relation that is between us and them: our Children share as largely in our Affections, as they do in our Blood: next to them, our Relations and Friends have the Preference: and in all Cases, the Love of ourselves is the Fountain from which our Love to others is derived. But Christian Charity flows from another Spring: here all the Affections terminate in Christ; and we know no other Relation but that which is derived from him, who is *Head over the whole Family*. And as the Love of Christ is the Source of Christian Charity, so is it the Measure of it too; and the Rule by which we must adjust our Love and Charity to others; he is our nearest Relation, who is nearest related to Christ; and is therefore the most immediate Object

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of our Love and Charity. *He that receiveth you, says our Blessed Lord to his Apostles, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* Then follow immediately the Words which I have now read to you, for the *Subject* of this Discourse.

In treating on which, I beg Leave to observe to you,

*First*, The several Degrees of Charity mentioned in them; and wherein the Excellency of one above the other consists.

*Secondly*, How truly Christian, and excellent in its Kind, that Charity is, which is the End and Design of this annual Solemnity.

I. If we begin our Account at the Verse immediately preceding the Text, we shall find four Degrees of Charity enumerated, and distinguished from each other, by the several and distinct Promises made to them. The first is, That of receiving an Apostle: *He that receiveth you, receiveth me.* The second, That of receiving a Prophet: *He that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward.* The third, That of receiving a righteous Man: *He that receiveth a righteous Man in the Name of a righteous Man, shall receive*  
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## DISCOURSE II. 35

*a righteous Man's Reward.* The fourth, That of relieving the meanest of Christ's Disciples: *Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little Ones, a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his Reward.*

Charity is distinguished into these different Kinds and Degrees, by the Dignity of the Persons who are the Objects of it. For since receiving a Prophet, shall entitle us to a Prophet's Reward; and receiving a righteous Man, to a righteous Man's Reward; it is plain that receiving a Prophet as far exceeds the Charity of receiving a righteous Man, as a Prophet is more excellent than he.

To receive a Prophet, because he is our Friend or Relation, is but a common Degree of Kindness; the Honour must be paid him because he is a Prophet; it must be done in the Name of a Prophet: so that the Motive and Principle upon which we act, must be taken into the Account; and our good Deeds will receive their true and proper Value, from the Views and Regards with which they are done.

In this lies the Difference between the

## 36 DISCOURSE II.

Christian and the Moral Virtue: the same Object appears not in the same Light to both. Nature melts at the Sight of Misery, and by a secret Sympathy feels what it sees; and relieves itself by administering Comfort and Support to the Afflicted: but Grace looks on the Sufferings of Christ in all his Members; and gives that Assistance to the Miserable for his Sake, which Nature gives only for its own. For this Reason we find Christ charging himself with all the Kindnesses and Acts of Mercy shewn to his Brethren and Disciples. *I was an hungered, says he, and ye gave ME Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave ME Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took ME in, naked, and ye clothed ME; I was sick, and ye visited ME; I was in Prison, and ye came unto ME.* This Regard to Christ, is the very Life and Soul of Christian Charity; and that only which can entitle our good Works to Reward at the last Day: for our good Works themselves have neither Merit nor Righteousness, but as they begin and end in Christ: the love of Christ is the Fountain of Christian Charity; and Christ in his Members is the Object of it.

This being the Nature of Christian Charity,



## DISCOURSE II. 37

rity, it is plain that one Kind will differ from another in Perfection, as it more nearly approaches the Person of Christ, who is the Object, and as it more strongly partakes of the Principle, which is the Love of Christ. And by this Rule of Proportion, our Saviour has placed the several Degrees of Charity mentioned in the Text ; as will appear by considering the Characters and Relations of the Persons, who are the immediate Objects.

The Persons mentioned are four Sorts : Apostles ; Prophets ; the Righteous ; and, the little Ones. They are ranked according to the Dignity of their Characters, which arises from the Relation they bear to Christ, who is Head over all. And under one or other of these Denominations, may every Christian be found : so that we have here, in Truth, a perfect Scheme of Christian Charity, and a Rule to direct us in the Choice of proper Objects.

The Apostles, upon the Death of our Saviour, succeeded to the Government and Direction of the Church : they were commissioned to feed and to rule the Flock in his Stead, and in his Name. Under them were placed Teachers and Pastors of differ-



## 38 DISCOURSE II.

ent Orders, who are comprehended under the general Name of Prophets.

These Offices have been perpetuated in the Church by a constant Succession of Men duly called to them; and the present Governors and Pastors of it stand in the same Degree of Nearness and Relation to Christ, that the Apostles and Prophets did, who went before them in the same Work of the Ministry; and we must *so account of them, as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, 1 Cor. iv. 1.

The two next Characters belong to the Flock of Christ; who are not distinguished from each other by any Difference in Character or Office, but only by their different Attainments in Faith; the Righteous are the *strong* in Faith: the little Ones are the *weak*. The Righteous are those, who, as the Apostle to the *Ephesians* expresses it, *are come unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ*. The little Ones are those he calls *Children*; unsettled in the Faith, and liable to *be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*, Eph. iv. 13, 14.

The learned *Grotius* reckons here but three Degrees, (for he leaves out the Apostles,

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## DISCOURSE II. 39

stles, who yet are plainly mentioned in the 40th Verse) and of them he says, that they are *tres Discipulorum Christi Gradus*. The Righteous he makes to be a middle Kind of Christian, between the little Ones and the Perfect: and by Prophets he understands only perfect Christians, without Regard to any peculiar Office or Character in the Church belonging to them. But this is neither agreeable to the Language of Scripture, nor to our Saviour's Design in this Place; the *δίκαιοι*, the *Righteous*, are always spoken of as perfect Christians: those who are to shine forth in the Kingdom like the Sun, are surely no mean or middle Kind of Christians; but they are called the *Righteous*. So in the 25th of St. Matthew, those who at the last Day shall be entitled to eternal Life, are the *Righteous*. In the 12th of the *Hebrews*, the Apostle tells them they are come—to the General Assembly and Church of the First Born, which are written in Heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, καὶ πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειωμένων: Are the *δίκαιοι*, *Righteous*, here spoken of as middle Christians,

where their distinguishing Character is, that they are *made perfect*?

Nor is the Word *Prophet* ever used, where Christians in general are spoken of; but it always denotes a peculiar Character and Office: he gave, says St. *Paul* to the *Ephesians*, *some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers*. Where the Offices are thus distinctly enumerated, Prophet denotes a distinct Order in the Ministry; but when it is used generally, it denotes the Pastors and Teachers of the Church, without Regard to their distinct Orders: and in the Text, Prophets follow after Apostles, in the same Manner that little Ones follow after the Righteous: for as little Ones include all Degrees of Christians under the Righteous, so Prophets include all Degrees of Pastors under Apostles.

Besides, our Saviour's Design in this Place was evidently to lay a Foundation for the Support of the Christian Ministry; he forbids them to provide for themselves, for this Reason, because they were Workmen worthy of their Hire, and ought to be provided for by others: and to encourage Men cheerfully to discharge this Duty to them,



## DISCOURSE II. 41

them, he adds, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me.* And when this was his Design and Intention, could he forget all Degrees of Teachers, but Apostles, and yet be so particular in reckoning up all Degrees of Christians? It was necessary to his Purpose indeed; and to complete the Comparison; to mention the several Degrees of Christian Charity, that it might appear how highly he valued, above all others, that which was to be the Support of his Ministry on Earth: and therefore having shewn the Preference that was to be given to his Ministers, according to the Dignity of their Office, he proceeds to shew, that others were but in a lower Degree, and were to be regarded according to their personal Attainments in Faith and Holiness; which was evidently giving the Preference to his Ministers upon Account of their Office, before all others, how great soever their spiritual Attainments might be. This was effectually to recommend them to the Care of the Faithful, by shewing, that by providing for them here, they laid up for themselves hereafter the greatest Riches: for *he that receiveth a Prophet, in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward.*

From



## 42 DISCOURSE II.

From this Declaration, made by our Saviour, we learn what ought to give the Preference in Christian Charity. The Relation which Men bear to Christ, is the Foundation of the Love and Honour that are due to them; and the nearer the Relation is, the greater Love and Honour are due to it. Of his Disciples our Saviour said in the Gospel, *Behold my Mother and my Brethren*: no Wonder then that he says to them here, *he that receiveth you, receiveth me*. By this Rule our Kindness must descend from the greatest to the meanest of Christ's Disciples; and when it rests there, *it shall in no wise lose its Reward*.

It were easy here to shew, the Title that these several Degrees of Charity have to their respective Rewards; but I should tire your Patience, should I run through every Kind; give me Leave only to instance in one, and because it is most applicable to our present Discourse, in that of *receiving a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet*.

This Charity is entitled to a Prophet's Reward: and well it may; for it is a Charity that does a Prophet's Duty: by enabling him to do the Work of his Calling, we share with him in it; and preach the Gos-  
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## DISCOURSE II. 43

pel by the Mouth which we feed. It is St. *Austin's* Observation concerning St. *Paul*, that when he held the Garments of those who stoned the Martyr *Stephen*, he did \**omnium Manibus lapidare*; the Assistance he gave to all, entitled him to the Guilt of all; and made his Hand to be in every Blow that was struck: and certain it is, that the Assistance and Encouragement we give Men, either in the Good, or Evil, they do, will make us Sharers with them in their Merit, or their Guilt. The Charge which St. *Paul* gives *Timothy*, to lay Hands suddenly on no Man, he supports with this Reason, *Neither be Partaker of other Men's Sins; keep thyself pure.* For *he* would have been chargeable with the Unworthiness of such, as he should, without due Trial, admit into the Ministry.

—\* Quando lapidatus est *Stephanus* primus Martyr pro Nomine Christi, evidentius aderat et *Saulus*; et sic aderat lapidantibus, ut non ei sufficeret si tantum suis Manibus lapidaret. Ut enim esset in omnium lapidantium Manibus, ipse omnium Vestimenta servabat; magis faviens omnes adjuvando, quam suis Manibus lapidando. *August. de S. Pauli Conversione.*

Inter Lapidatores Sancti *Stephani* Martyris ibi erat iste durus, et forte cæteris durior, omnium lapidantium Vestimenta servabat, ut omnium in Manibus lapidaret. *Item in Ps. 147.*

By

## 44 DISCOURSE II.

By the same Rule, to bring Men worthy of the Office, into the Ministry; to support and encourage them in the Discharge of their Duty; is to partake with them in their Ministry, and must be attended with the Reward that is proper and peculiar to it.

The Work of the Ministry is great, and requires our whole Attendance; it is the Prophet's Business to instruct the Weak; to comfort the Afflicted; to visit the Sick; to rebuke Sinners; and what time can be stolen from these necessary Duties, is but too little to be employed in searching the Oracles of Truth, that we may know the perfect Will of God in all Things: and if to this, the Trouble of the World must be added; and the constant Care of supporting Ourselves and Families against encroaching Poverty and Want; who is sufficient for these Things? Must not the Ignorant want Instruction, and the Afflicted Comfort, whilst the Prophet is employed in the meaner Cares of the World? And may not such then, who, by their Bounty and Liberality, set the Prophets of the Lord free from the World, and in a Manner consecrate them anew, and entirely to his Service, be properly said to labour with them in the Work

## DISCOURSE II. 45

Work of the Gospel? and as they partake in the Work, ought they not likewise to partake in the Reward?

The properest Method of exercising this Charity, is by allotting such a Maintenance for the Ministers of Christ, as may enable them to provide for themselves, and those who depend on them: and of this Kind of Charity, the Piety of our gracious Sovereign has given a noble Instance; which will make her Memory dear to all Ages in the Church of God; and will, we doubt not, be an Addition to the Crown of Glory reserved for her in the Heavens.

Next to its present Wants and Necessities, Poverty has nothing more terrible in it, than the Fear of Futurity; nor is Life acquainted with a more anxious and distracting Care, than that which arises from the Prospect of entailing Poverty upon those who are to come after us; and whom, by the strictest Bonds of Nature, we are obliged to provide for. After a present Maintenance therefore, the next Degree of Charity is to lighten this heavy Burden; that the Ministers of Christ may with Cheerfulness, and without Interruption, attend the Service of the Altar; when they see a Way open for the Support of their indigent



## 46 DISCOURSE II.

indigent Families, when they themselves, their only present Support, shall be taken from them. And this carries me to the second Thing I proposed, to observe to you,

II. How truly Christian, and excellent in its Kind, that Charity is, which is the End and Design of this annual Solemnity.

The Objects of this Charity, are the Widows and Orphans of those who spent their Lives in the Service of the Altar, and were found faithful in the Sight of God. Considered in themselves, they are not, I trust, the meanest of Christ's Disciples: the Example of their Husbands and Fathers; the pious Instruction under which they have lived; the regular Devotions to which they have been always accustomed; and their constant Communion with the Church; are sure Pledges to us, of their Faith and Holiness. But to their own, they add the Prophet's Claim to your Charity, who has left them nothing else to maintain them. The Age and Infirmities of the one, the Youth and Inexperience of the other; and the near Relation they bear to Christ, by his Servant now at Rest with him; contain all the Motives and Arguments that can be used to excite the Charity of a Christian.

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## DISCOURSE II. 47

Were this Poverty the Effect of Luxury or Idleness, we might well be ashamed to plead its Cause in public: but the Reasons of it are too well known; and it is so far from being our Reproach, that in some Measure it is our Glory: for notwithstanding the meanest of our parochial Cures, and the Discouragements of Want and Poverty, yet the Service of God has not been neglected, nor his Altar forsaken: and the numerous Objects of Charity, that are to be found among the Descendants of the *English* Clergy, are an Evidence on their Behalf, that they *fed the Flock of God which was among them, taking the Oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre Sake, but of a ready Mind.* And let no Man grudge us this our Boasting; that we can in this Church shew more Labourers worthy of their Hire, who, without Gold or Silver in their Purfes, or Scrip for their Journey, preach the Gospel of Christ, than any other Church in the Christian World can do.

Some who subsist upon the Charity of this Corporation, are living Testimonies of the Faith and Constancy of the *English* Clergy, to God, and to their King. I shall easily be understood to mean the Widows of the

## 48 DISCOURSE II.

the sequestered Clergy ; who still labour under that Poverty, which their Husbands willingly chose to submit to, rather than to sacrifice their Faith and their Allegiance to the Wickedness of the Age they lived in. And is this a disgraceful Poverty to the Ministers of the Gospel, which so evidently *bears the Marks of the Lord Jesus ?*

Never does Christ more truly suffer in his Members, than when his Members suffer for him : nor can our Acts of Mercy ever more nearly approach him, than when we relieve those who endure Afflictions for his and the Gospel's Sake. Here then, my Brethren, *is Christ Jesus evidently set forth before your Eyes, suffering among you ; suffering in these Members, who inherit the Poverty of his Prophets ; which they, for his, and the Gospel's Sake, embraced.*

Had the Parents of these Children been turned to the more advantageous Employments of the World ; had they, with the Substance which was spent in their Education, and in fitting them for the Ministry, bought any Knowledge but the Knowledge of the Gospel ; it would have made an answerable Return to them and their Families ; for every Workman receives his Hire,  
and

## DISCOURSE II. 49

and a due Recompence for his Labour, except the poor Ministers of Christ, who have this only for their Comfort, that *they* are worthy of it.

It is this Poverty of the Prophet, which was the undeserved Lot of his holy Office, that now claims our Charity: and have not the Children a Right to ask in the Prophet's Name, since it is the Prophet's Poverty that afflicts them? Is it not just that they should plead their Father's Relation to Christ, for a Support under their present Wants; since their Father's Relation to Christ has entailed these Wants upon them?

If therefore there be any Arguments for Pity, in Age and Infirmities, oppressed with Poverty; or if Youth and Innocence, exposed to Want, have any Charms to move Compassion; if the Poverty of the Gospel has any Right to a Christian's Charity; or if the Christian Priesthood has for its Work's Sake, and its near Relation to Christ, any Title to Love or Honour; Behold! how all these Motives unite to plead the Cause that is now before you.

If the least Charity, bestowed on one of Christ's little Ones, shall draw down the Blessings of Heaven upon us; if to receive

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## 50 DISCOURSE II.

a Righteous Man, shall entitle us to a Righteous Man's Reward; and if by shewing Mercy to a Prophet, we shall receive a Prophet's Reward; what Rewards may we not expect to reap from this Charity; where the little Ones and the Righteous are united into one Object, by suffering under the same common Calamity; and where both have the Prophet's Name, and the Prophet's Poverty to plead?

To these Motives what further can we add, but only our Prayers; that God would regard this poor Family of his Prophets, and raise them up Friends for their Comfort; that he would open the Hearts of the People towards them, for his Servants the Prophets Sake.

And may the Charity bestowed on these poor Orphans, be ever had in Remembrance before the Lord. May he whom their Fathers served in the Gospel, and with whom they now rest from their Labours, be ever mindful of the Kindness shewn to his Household of Faith.

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## DISCOURSE III.

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LUKE ix. 54, 55.

*And when his Disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.*

**W**HAT Provocation the Disciples had to call Fire from Heaven to consume the Samaritans, may be learnt from the 51st and following Verses: *And it came to pass, when the Time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his Face to go to Jerusalem; and sent Messengers before his Face: And they went and entered into a Village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him; because his*

## 52 DISCOURSE III.

*Face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his Disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? And he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them.—*

The Hatred between the Jews and Samaritans was founded in a religious Controversy; and had proceeded so far, that all Offices of common Humanity had ceased between them; insomuch that when our Saviour asked a Women of that Country but for a little Water to drink, she marvelled at it, and said, *How is it, that thou being a Jew askest Drink of me, which am a Woman of Samaria?* John iv. 9. The Reason of her Wonder is added in the next Words; *For the Jews have no Dealings with the Samaritans.* From the 20th Verse of the same Chapter we may gather what the Foundation of this Quarrel was: *Our Fathers, says the Woman, worshipped in this Mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the Place where Men ought to worship.* This Account is likewise confirmed by Josephus, who tells

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### DISCOURSE III. 53

us, that there were perpetual Quarrels and Animosities between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, occasioned by a Contest concerning the Holiness of their Temples: the One affirming the Temple at *Jerusalem* to be holy; and that all *Jews* ought to send their Offerings thither: the others affirming the same concerning the Temple in Mount *Gerizim*.

It was about the Time of the Passover, that our Saviour took this Journey to *Jerusalem*, as we may collect from what is said in the 51st Verse; *And it came to pass when the Time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his Face to go to Jerusalem.* The Time that our Saviour was received up, we know, was at the *Jewish* Passover; and this Time being come, when this Journey was made, shews it to be about the Time of the Celebration of this Feast. And this may account, together with what has been already said, for the unkind Reception which the Disciples met with in *Samaria*. The *Samaritans* finding them upon a Journey to *Jerusalem* about the Time of the Passover, concluded that they were going to celebrate the Feast there, and consequently were such as esteemed the Temple of *Jerusalem* to be the true Place of Worship,



### 54 DISCOURSE III.

ship, and were Despisers of the Temple in the Mount of *Samaria*. For this Reason they refused to afford them any Entertainment in their Village; but sent them out to prosecute their Journey, without the necessary Refreshments for it. This raised the Indignation of the Disciples: they immediately call to Mind the Story of *Elias*; it was in *Samaria* that *Elias* had destroyed the Captains and their Fifties with Fire from Heaven; the Place itself prompted them to imitate the noble Vengeance, that had once before been executed there; they knew that a greater than *Elias* was there now, and had been more barbarously treated: why not then the like exemplary Punishment? Why should not the Fire of Heaven come down to consume the Enemies of God's own Son, as once it did to destroy the Enemies of his Prophet? Warm with these Thoughts, and full of Resentment for their Master's Honour, they apply to him, *Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?* But he felt other Resentments than theirs; and turned about, and calmly rebuked them, saying, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.*

I have

## DISCOURSE III. 55

I have been the larger in setting forth the Circumstances of this Story, because in so many Instances they are applicable to our own Case. It was Hatred that grew out of a religious Controversy, that bred the Treason of this Day: it was Fire, though not from Heaven, that was called for to decide the Dispute: it was Zeal for Christ, *but not according to Knowledge*, that prompted to the Revenge: the Revenge was bloody and unchristian; and to every One concerned in it does the Voice of Christ reach, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.*

It would be endless on this Occasion to run into the Controversies that are between us and the Church of *Rome*: the Case we have this Day to plead with them, wants not the Support which the Righteousness of our Cause might afford it. Let them be the Disciples: let us be the *Samaritans*; mistaken, nay, obstinately mistaken in our Religion: let them have all the Advantage that the Parallel in the Text can afford them: let them call us Heretics, Schismatics, Aliens from the Body and Church of Christ: yet, after all, their furious Rage, and their cruel Thirst after Blood entitle them to the Reproof of their Lord, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.*

## 56 DISCOURSE III.

Not all the boasted Advantages of their Church can justify them in the Cruelty they use towards their Fellow-Creatures. Have they a Zeal and Love for Christ? So had the Disciples. Are they provoked by the Indignities offered to him? So were they. Have they Faith enough among them to work Miracles in his Name; and will they from thence justify their Practice? The same Faith had the Disciples; *Wilt thou*, say they, *that We command Fire to come down from Heaven?* You see their Faith: they wanted nothing but the Lord's Permission to do the thing: and yet, their Faith notwithstanding, we learn from the unerring Voice of Truth, that their Spirit was not right within them.

But when we have considered our Saviour's Judgment in this Case, and how far it extends, we shall be better able to judge, to what Kind of Spirit the dark Contrivance of this Day is to be ascribed.

The Case has been already stated, and I need not repeat it: my Business at present shall be to consider, how far this Reason of our Saviour's excludes all Use of temporal Punishments in Matters of Religion. And,

I. I shall briefly shew that it holds in all Cases with respect to Church-power.

II. That

### DISCOURSE III. 57

II. That the Argument does not affect the Civil Magistrate's Power; nor tye up his Hands from interposing with the civil Sword in Matters proper for his Jurisdiction; however they may be pretended to be allied to Religion.

III. I shall apply what is said to the present Occasion.

I. As to the Persons on whom the Disciples would have executed Vengeance, they were on two Accounts the Objects of their Wrath. They were Apostates from the true Religion, and had erected a Temple to themselves on the Mount of *Samaria*. Besides this, they had very inhumanly treated them and their Master. The Rule of Charity is so very plain in Scripture, and the Duty of forgiving Injuries so express, that I think personal Affronts and Injuries can with no Colour be pleaded to justify Persecution. And therefore the whole Weight of the Argument lies upon the Honour of God and Religion; from which Topics the Doctrine of extirpating Heretics fetches its main Support. But to this Argument our Saviour has furnished us with a short but full Reply, Ver. 56. *The Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them.*

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### 58 DISCOURSE III.

The Honour of God is best consulted, by complying with the gracious Designs of his Providence; and the Honour of Religion best secured, by promoting the Ends of it: and since our Saviour has told us, that the Design of his coming into the World, and the End of the Religion he taught, was not to destroy, but to save Men's Lives; there can be no greater Indignity offered to God, no greater Contempt shewn of Christ, or Blemish cast upon Religion; than to make Religion, which was designed to save Men, the Means and Instrument of destroying them. The Argument reaches to all Methods of propagating Religion which are hurtful or injurious to Men, as well as merely destroying them by the Fire or Sword; for the *Son of Man* no more came to injure or abuse Men, than he did to destroy them: and therefore the Argument is equally strong against injuring or abusing our Fellow-Creatures in order to propagate the Faith, as it is against destroying them. And very strong it must be in both Cases, since it is our Saviour's own Argument.

It is true, that all Punishments do not come under the Notion of Injuries or Abuses; since many are calculated for the Benefit

### DISCOURSE III. 59

Benefit of Offenders ; to reclaim them to a better Mind, and better Manners : and consequently, all Punishments will not come within this Argument of our Blessed Saviour : and therefore, notwithstanding what has been said, it may still be pretended, that there is Room for the Exercise of temporal Punishments (for of such only I speak at present) in the Case of Religion ; since some Punishments may be subservient to the End of Religion, and may help to set forward the Salvation of Men.

But however good a Reason this may be for exercising temporal Punishments in the Cause of Religion, it can signify nothing in the present Case, unless the Church be vested with a Power of dispensing temporal Punishments : for this Reason cannot create a Power, where it is not ; it can only direct the Exercise of it, where it is. And therefore, to those who urge the Conveniency of temporal Punishments in Matters of Religion, we answer with our Blessed Saviour, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of*: the Kingdom of Christ is not of this World ; nor is it to be erected or supported by worldly Power : he has not intrenched upon the civil Magistrate's Authority, or granted any  
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### 60 DISCOURSE III.

Part of their Commission to his Disciples. When *St. Peter* drew the Sword in his Defence, he commanded him to put up the Sword again into its Place, with this Threatning, *For all they who take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword.* And in his Answer to *Pilate* he declares, *My Kingdom is not of this World. If my Kingdom were of this World, then would my Servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: But now is my Kingdom not from hence,* John xviii. 36.

This may serve to shew the Meaning and Extent of our Saviour's Argument; and how contrary it is to the Genius and Spirit of the Christian Religion, to found its Faith in temporal Punishments. The Powers which are derived to the Church from Christ the Head of it, are purely spiritual: the Punishments she inflicts, are of the same Nature; and the Effect of them generally suspended till the Offender comes to another World. It is just Reasoning, I think, to infer from the spiritual Nature of Christ's Kingdom, and the spiritual Power of his Ministers on Earth, that temporal Punishments are not proper to enforce the Laws and Edicts of Christ's Kingdom; for since  
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### DISCOURSE III. 61

the Kingdom is not of this World, the Powers belonging to this Kingdom cannot be of this World. But how those, who derive all Church Power and Authority from the Magistrate or the People, can upon their own Principles exclude temporal Punishments in Matters of Religion, I cannot well conceive: for if the Authority be of this World, the Magistrate bears the Sword, to command Obedience to his Laws and Edicts; and the Exercise of the Sword reaches as far as his Authority goes; and therefore if the Power of the Church is founded in his Authority, it must likewise be upheld by his Sword: and consequently, those who are for throwing all Spiritual Power out of the Church, and introducing into the Room of it, a Power derived from the civil Magistrate, must, to exempt the Consciences of Men from a spiritual Jurisdiction, submit them to a temporal; and leave them to truckle to the Power of the Sword; which is in its Consequence, whatever it may be in its Principle, downright Popery.

As the Power of the Magistrate is by some exalted in Matters of Religion, beyond all Proportion of Reason; so by others it is as much depressed.

Let



## 62 DISCOURSE III.

Let us therefore in the second Place proceed to shew, that the Reason of the Text does not affect the civil Magistrate's Power, nor tie up his Hands from interposing with the civil Sword, in Matters proper for its Jurisdiction, however they may be pretended to be allied to Religion.

The Foundation or Principle upon which the Magistrate's Power has been both unreasonably exalted and depressed, is Liberty of Conscience. Though, to speak properly, on the one Side a Liberty from Conscience seems to be the Thing aimed at; for which Reason all Regard to spiritual Matters is struck out, and the Magistrate's Will set up as the supreme Law of Conscience; on the other Side a Liberty for Conscience to act as it pleases, is the Thing contended for; and therefore the Magistrate's Power, in all Cases where Conscience is concerned, is taken away, and Men set at Liberty to act as their Conscience, how erroneous soever, shall direct them, without Controul. But it ought to be remembered, that the Arguments drawn from the Nature of Religion, and of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, against the Use of temporal Punishments, are conclusive only as to the Ministers of that Kingdom ;

### DISCOURSE III. 63

dom; and cannot extend to the civil Magistrate: they, as *they* are Ministers of a Kingdom purely spiritual, can have no Claim as such to any temporal Power; and therefore they can exercise none: they consider Men's Actions with respect to the Consequences of them in another World, and therefore they denounce the Punishments of another World against Offenders: *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we persuade Men.* But the civil Magistrate has a temporal Power; and the Peace and Order of this World are his Care and Concern: it is his proper Business to consider the Actions of Men with regard to public Peace and Order; without respecting from what internal Principle they flow. If the Actions of Men are such as tend to disturb the Peace, or to destroy the Frame of the Government over which he presides; whether they proceed from Conscience or not, he is not bound to consider; nor indeed can he; but it is his Duty to punish and to restrain them. Whenever Men's Religion or Conscience come to shew themselves in Practice, they fall under the Cognizance of the civil Power: or whenever they branch out into Principles destructive of the civil Government, they  
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## 64 DISCOURSE III.

are then ripe for the civil Sword, and may justly be rooted out. Upon these Principles, I presume there have been many penal Laws enacted against Popery in this Kingdom: not upon the weak Supposition that no Man's Conscience ever led him to be a Papist; but upon this known and experienced Truth, that whenever a Man's Conscience leads him to be a Papist, it leads him to be an Enemy to the Constitution of this Government; and therefore the Government has a Right to secure itself against the Practices of a professed Enemy, by the Terror of temporal Punishments, notwithstanding the Pleas of Conscience and Religion. And should any Sect hereafter arise, entering into Practices, or professing Principles destructive of the legal Constitution, the Magistrate would have as good a Right to unsheath the Sword against them, as at present he has to do it against the Papists: nor shall it avail them, any more than these, to say, they act upon Principles of Religion or Conscience.

As to mere Difference in Opinion, which ends only in Speculation, or influences only the internal Acts of the Mind, or produces only *such external Acts* as no Way concern the public Peace, I see not how the Magistrate

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## DISCOURSE III. 65

trate can interest himself in them: but wherever Difference of Opinion is attended with Consequences that may affect the State, how can it stand with Reason, or public Good, to exclude the Magistrate's Power in such Cases?

Men often dispute against penal Laws, under the Notion of their being Laws of the Church; which of Right they never can be; for the Church has no Right or Authority to impose penal Laws: they are, strictly and properly speaking, Laws of the State; they have for their End, as all other civil Laws have, the Good of the State, and are enacted to prevent the Growth either of Principles or Practices which are conceived to be dangerous: and I would fain know how the Subject's Conscience can bind the Magistrate's Power from acting in its proper Sphere, which is to prevent all growing Dangers to the State. There have been those in this Kingdom, and there may be again, who found themselves persuaded in Conscience, that the Goods of Christians were common: should such a one come to share with you, as he would call it, in your Goods, or as the Law would term it, to rob you of them, would his Conscience and his



## 66 DISCOURSE. III.

misunderstanding a few Texts of Scripture relating to that Matter, be a good and justifiable Plea in a Court of Justice? If it would, I dare engage, the Sect will soon be numerous: if it would not, it can be no general Rule, that Conscience ought to be exempt from penal Laws.

The Truth of the Matter lies in a very narrow Compass: the Church has no Right to impose penal Laws upon any Account: in Matters purely of a religious Nature, the State has no Right neither: but of such Matters perhaps there may be great Scarcity in the World; for the Passions of Men work themselves into their religious Concerns; and the Controversy grows insensibly into a Struggle for Power and Superiority; and often breeds Convulsions that shake the very Constitution of the civil Government. And must the Magistrate sit still because the Bustle is about Religion, and be told that he has nothing to do in it? Surely it becomes him to stir and to drive Conscience out of the State to its proper Seat, the Heart of Man; whither his Power neither can, nor ought to pursue it.

In this Question of the Magistrate's Right, it matters not what a Man's Opini-

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### DISCOURSE III. 67

ons are, or how well or how ill a Man's Conscience is informed: for thus much is certain, that the Magistrate has no Right to punish Men for the Mistakes in their Judgment, or the Errors of their Consciences. On the other Side, when the Magistrate calls a Man to an Account for his Actions, I cannot see that it is so much as his Duty to enquire, whether the Man took what he did to be a Part of his Religion, or whether he followed the Dictates of his Conscience or no. What can the civil Magistrate have to do in such Questions; or how can he arrive at any Evidence concerning the Truth of these Matters? The Nature of the Action lies properly before him, considered in itself, and then in its Consequences; and if it tend to Mischief, to breed Disturbance in the State, he has a Right to punish it, without considering whether it be a religious Action or no.

There would need no disputing in this Case, if Men would attend to the just Consequences of their own Principles. They lay it down for a Maxim, that the Magistrate has *nothing* to do with Conscience; which is very true: but then they infer, that the Magistrate cannot punish Men for acting according to their Conscience; which

## 68 DISCOURSE III.

is to say, that his Authority is suspended by the Plea of Conscience: and if so, the Magistrate, I think, will have more than enough to do with it; since the People's Conscience will bind his Power in the Exercise of the Sword, and he must of Necessity in the Administration of Justice enter into the Examination of Conscience; for since that is to be his Rule, he ought to know and to consider it.

But if you would attend to the natural and just Consequences of the Principle, the Truth will stand in a clear Light. The Magistrate has nothing to do with Conscience: and therefore on one Hand *he* has no Right to bring Conscience to his Bar, to punish the Errors or Mistakes of it; or to censure even the Actions which proceed from it, unless they affect that which is his immediate Care, the public Good, or the private Peace and Property of his Subjects: on the other Hand, no one else can bring Conscience before him, or by the Pleas of it supersede his Authority in any Case proper for his Cognizance. For the Magistrate might well say, The Action is such as I am concerned to enquire into, Conscience I have nothing to do with, it does not lie before me,

## DISCOURSE III. 69

me, and therefore I shall not attend to its Pretences. Nor indeed is it possible that he should, since it is in every Man's Power in all Cases to plead Conscience; which is never more easily pretended to, than by those who have none. A Man under a criminal Accusation might as well refer himself to what was done in the *Mogul's* Country, as to what passed at that Time in his own unsearchable Heart; and the Magistrate might with much more Reason admit the Evidence in one Case, than in the other, where there is no Possibility of knowing the Truth.

It may be thought perhaps by some, that I have been pleading all this while for the Magistrate's Right to persecute the Subject upon Account of Religion; and so I have, if there be any Religion which indispensably obliges Men to disturb the public Peace, to pervert the Ways of Justice, to be injurious to their Brethren, either in their Life, or Property, or good Name; for these Things certainly the Magistrate ought to punish and correct. But if this be what all Religions universally disclaim, and abhor, there is no Danger that any Man should suffer merely for his Religion, because the Magistrate has a Right to punish Sedition and Rebellion,



70 DISCOURSE III.

and to do justice in Cases of private Injury and Oppression. One may be mistaken in his Notions of Religion, and yet in his political Capacity, as touching the Laws of his Country, he may be blameless; and as long as he continues so, his Mistakes are out of the Reach of the Magistrate's Power.

The Reason of the Case extends as well to Doctrines as to Practices: the Magistrate has a Right to suppress all such as are pernicious to the State. In Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, there were some who maintained as a Point of Religion, the Unlawfulness of Women's Government: should the Doctrine be revived at this Day, I imagine that the Plea of Religion would not atone for the Malignancy of the Opinion.

What has been said may serve to mark out to us the just Limits of spiritual and civil Power. The Ministers of Christ are not of this World, and therefore they have no Right to extend their Master's Kingdom, by the Exercise of worldly or temporal Power: the civil Magistrate is of this World, and the Affairs of it are his proper Care; from which he ought not to be excluded by any Pretences or Pleas of Religion: nor will this bring any Man under Difficulty upon the Account

### DISCOURSE III. 71

Account of pure Religion, which never interferes with the Magistrate's Right; but where Men build upon religious Doctrines or Practices destructive of civil Government, they must answer to God for perverting Religion, and to the Magistrate for disturbing the Public.

*Lastly*, It remains only that we apply what has been said to the Occasion of this Day. There are but two Things which the Church of *Rome* can insist on, both of which are determined against them by the Doctrine of the Text. For 1st, Whatever Differences in Religion there are between us, yet they are unjustifiable in the Methods they use for our Conversion. And 2dly, Notwithstanding all their Pleas of Religion, the civil Power has a Right to punish their Practices, and did justly exercise that Right, in bringing the Contrivers and Actors of the bloody Tragedy of this Day to an open and a shameful Death. These are but the necessary Consequences of what has been already discoursed, and therefore I shall not trouble you with enlarging on them.

How justly then may we expostulate with the Church of *Rome* the Cruelty of this Day, in which they outdid even themselves.

## 72 DISCOURSE III.

selves. Deposing a King, which they have often attempted, was not their Work ; enslaving the Nobility, which is their common Practice, was not their Aim ; they had prepared a richer Sacrifice to the Triple Crown, and intended to expiate the Offence of the Nation against the Pope, by the noblest Blood which it ever produced.

Could they have buried our Laws and our Constitutions in one general Ruin, they had then Hopes of succeeding in their Attempt. These *Children of the World are wise in their Generation*, and rightly judge, that to confound the Peace of the State, and the Purity of the Church, is their only Way to prevail against both ; since nothing can make their Dominion tolerable, but Anarchy and Confusion ; nothing their Religion, but Atheism and Infidelity.

But God prevented their Malice, and turned their Mischief upon their own Heads. In Memory of which Blessing this Day was deservedly distinguished in the *English Calendar* : which Piety of our Ancestors has descended upon us their Posterity in new Blessings ; and this Day has been again consecrated by the Deliverance of these Kingdoms out of the Hands of the same implacable Enemies.

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### DISCOURSE III. 73

There is nothing an *Englishman* has more to fear than the prevailing Power of Popery; and so universally it is dreaded, that Popery must ever be a Millstone to the Neck of any Cause to which it is but so much as generally suspected to be allied; and this, I presume, has been well understood by those who have always been labouring to infuse the Fears and Jealousies of it into the Minds of the People, and to clog the Work of the Government with the Suspicions of it. If there be any Aspersions, which Men should make a Conscience of casting upon their Rulers, it is this, which contains whatever can be thought on to render a Man odious. To design the Advancement of Popery, is to design the Ruin of the State, and the Destruction of the Church; it is to sacrifice the Nation to a double Slavery, to prepare Chains both for their Bodies and their Minds.

What Interest is to be served by fomenting these Jealousies, is, I think, hard to be understood: the Protestant Succession is established by the Law, and what further Security can be had, must rise out of the Affections of the People; which will not be increased by persuading them, that they stand  
suspected



## 74 DISCOURSE III.

suspected in the Opinion of those who may  
 be one Day their Governors. Should these  
 Jealousies so far prevail, (as we trust they  
 cannot) as to render one great Part of the  
 People of *England* suspected to the Princes  
 abroad, what Strength would the Protestant  
 Succession gain by these Means? Would  
 not the Consequence be, that this Part of  
 the People would begin to imagine their  
 Cause prejudged, and think with less Pleasure  
 upon the Security, which now they esteem  
 as their great Blessing? What may grow  
 out of such mutual Distrusts in Length of  
 Time, should they once prevail, I cannot  
 tell, but no Good, I am sure. They who  
 heartily wish well to the Succession, will  
 endeavour that there may be a mutual Con-  
 fidence and good Opinion, between the  
 People and the Princes of the Blood, that  
 whenever the Time comes, which must rob  
 us of our dearest Blessing, they may ascend  
 the Throne neither suspecting nor suspected;  
 but may be received with as much Joy, as  
 the Circumstances of that sad (and I hope  
 far distant) Day will admit of. Let the  
 People be told how fully they inherit the  
 Virtues of their Royal Ancestors, that no  
 Distance of Time or Place can ever efface  
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### DISCOURSE III. 75

their Love for our common Country ; but let none but theirs and their Country's Enemies insinuate, that there is any Cause for mutual Fears and Jealousies between them.

But whatever our Fears are, let them be so far suspended at least, that we may enjoy the Ease and Tranquillity which the present auspicious Reign affords. Let not all our Zeal for our holy Religion be spent in quarrelling and disputing about it ; but some of it be shewn in our dutiful Behaviour to our Governors, in mutual Love and Charity. Let the Purity of our Religion be expressed in the Innocence of our Lives ; that whenever God shall be pleased to deliver us from the Scourge of War, we may be in such a Disposition to receive the Blessing, *that Mercy and Truth may meet together, and Righteousness and Peace kiss each other.*

Above all, let us earnestly contend with God in Prayer for Mercies upon our good Queen ; that she may be long continued to us ; that he would give Peace in her Time ; that no Demerit of ours may rob us of the invaluable Blessings we enjoy in her ; that whenever she, ripe for Glory and Immortality, shall be called to everlasting Peace and a better Crown, that then he would  
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## 76 DISCOURSE III.

with a more especial Eye of Mercy and  
Tenderness regard these orphan Kingdoms,  
and hide them under the Shelter of his  
Wings, till the Danger be overpast.

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## DISCOURSE IV.

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2 SAM. xxiii. 3, 4.

*The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me; He that ruleth over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of God: And he shall be as the Light of the Morning when the Sun riseth, even a Morning without Clouds; as the tender Grass springing out of the Earth, by clear shining after Rain.*

THE Words read to you, are said to be the last of *David*, and uttered by the *Spirit of the Lord*, whose *Word* was in his *Tongue*. They are by some *Jewish* Interpreters referred to the Days of the *Messiah*, as foretelling the Righteousness and Increase of his Kingdom for evermore: but in this Sense, they can no otherwise relate to the  
*Messiah,*



## 78 DISCOURSE IV.

*Messiah*, than as they are pointed at him through *David*, who was a Type of that Great Prince of Peace and of Righteousness; and consequently, in their natural and literal Sense, they regard the temporal Government of *David*, and stand as a fit Instruction for the Princes of the Earth.

There is likewise some Doubt of the Time when these Words were first spoken: whether this Admonition and Promise were given *David* upon his first Entrance on his Kingdom, as a sure Direction to guide him through the Difficulties of Empire; and by him delivered as his last Words, and the best Legacy which he could bequeath, to those who were to succeed him in the Throne of *Israel*: or whether they were first conceived and uttered by *David* in the last Scene of his Life, and left with the Authority of a dying Father to his Sons, as containing the true Secret of governing happily; which he had learned, both from long Experience, and from the Influence of the Spirit of God. But in whichever of these Views we consider the Text, it comes to the same Thing; and we have the true Art of governing, by which a Prince may render himself and his People happy, described

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## DISCOURSE IV. 79

scribed to us by the Wisdom of the Divine Spirit. *He that ruleth over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of the Lord.*

It is an Happiness that we may justly glory in, that these Words are a proper Theme for this Day, the Subject of which is the Accession of our Prince to the Throne. Such a Description of the Ruler's Duty produced on the like Occasion, would in many Places be esteemed a Reproach to the Prince; and could yield no Fruit to the People, but a Sense of their Misfortune. Unhappy Countries! where even such Scriptures have the Sound of Treason; but with us, the brighter Light they are placed in, the more Honour they reflect on the Throne, the greater Comfort and Consolation on the People: for though the Merit of good Government be the Prince's proper Praise, yet the Benefit of it is universal, and reaches even the meanest of his Subjects.

The Prosperity of a Prince, who rules in the Fear of the Lord, is represented to us, in the latter Part of the Text, under very beautiful Similitudes: *He shall be as the Light of the Morning, when the Sun riseth, even a Morning without Clouds.* The Sun is the great Spirit of the World, in the Light  
of

## 80 DISCOURSE IV.

of which all Things are made to rejoice ; perpetual Spring attends his Course ; all Things revive at his Approach, and put on a new Face of Youth and Beauty : Winter and Frost lag behind him ; Nature grows deformed, and the World sickens at his Departure. What the Sun is to the World, the same is a good Prince to his People : he is the Life and Soul of the Public ; his Influence produces Beauty, Order, and Regularity, and so animates every Member, that the whole Society is Harmony and Peace. This Difference there is, the Sun in his meridian Glory, strikes some Parts with too fierce a Fire, and the Field fades under the Heat which should refresh it : but the just Prince, like the rising Sun in a clear Morning, shines with kinder Rays, and his Justice being always tempered with Love and Mercy, can never be destructive.

As this Similitude sets before us the Blessings derived from a just Prince to his People, so does the next represent to us the Stability of Kingdoms so happily directed. That Government is always in its Youth and Vigour that is under the Management of a wise Ruler ; its inward Constitution is healthful, and so confirmed in Strength, that

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## DISCOURSE IV. 81

it stands secure from outward Dangers :  
*He shall be as the tender Grass springing out  
of the Earth by clear shining after Rain.*  
There cannot be a more lively Image of a  
flourishing Condition, than what is conveyed  
to us in these Words. The Grass which  
is forced by the Heat of the Sun, before the  
Ground is well prepared by Rains, is weak  
and languid, and of a faint Complexion :  
but when *clear shining* succeeds the gentle  
Showers of Spring, the Field puts forth its  
best Strength, and is more beautifully ar-  
rayed *than even Solomon in all his Glory.*  
Such is the Splendor, such are the never-  
fading Glories of a Kingdom, whose Prince  
ruleth in the Fear of the Lord.

The Text thus explained leads us to  
consider,

*First*, The Character of a good Prince,  
expressed in these Words, *He that ruleth  
over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of  
God.*

*Secondly*, How great a Blessing a just  
Prince is to his People ; which is repre-  
sented under the Similitudes of the rising  
Sun, and the flourishing Grass springing  
out of the Earth.

*First*, then, we are to consider the Cha-  
G
racter



## 82 DISCOURSE IV.

rafter of a good Prince expreffed in thefe Words ; *He that ruleth over Men muft be juft, ruling in the Fear of God.*

Justice, in the limited Notion of the Word, as it fignifies a due Execution of the Law, an equal Diftribution of Rewards and Punifhments, to the Obedient and Difobedient, makes but a Part of the Description of a good Governor ; that which fills up the Character, is a more extenfive Virtue, influencing the whole Conduct of a Reign, and denotes rather the general Habit of Virtue, than any particular Acts that flow from it. What this Virtue is, may beft be understood by comparing it with that, which is the true Meafure of it, the Fear of the Lord. And thus the Text has taught us to explain the Notion, referring us evidently to the Fear of the Lord, as to the proper *Rule* and *Meafure* of that Justice which it requires in a Ruler : *He that ruleth over Men muft be juft* ; what is meant by juft, the following Words inform us ; *Ruling in the Fear of God.*

The Fear of God is in all Cafes the Beginning of Wisdom, as being the true Foundation of Religion ; the Principle from which the Knowledge of our Duty, as well

## DISCOURSE IV. 83

as our Obligation to Obedience, is in all Instances deducible. It is a Principle which extends to all the Stations and Circumstances of human Life ; and will teach the Prince, as well how to govern, as the Subject how to obey.

Now the Fear of the Lord either means a just Sense of the Attributes of God, or else necessarily supposes it ; for Fear always follows, and what is determined by the Conception we form of the Thing, or Person feared. If we join to great Power great Malice, and a settled Resolution to do Mischief, the Object so clothed, strikes with Terror and Confusion, and the Result is an abject, slavish Fear : if we add to unlimited Power, as great Goodness and Benevolence, such a Being creates in our Minds, Awe and Reverence, and replenishes our Hearts with filial Fear and Veneration. To know the Difference between the Fear of a Father and of a Tyrant, we must necessarily consult our Ideas of both, by which only we can distinguish the Passions. To act therefore under the Fear of God, is one and the same Thing as to be influenced by a just Sense of his Power, Holiness, and other divine Perfections ; and to *rule* in the Fear

## 84 DISCOURSE IV.

of the Lord, is so to *govern*, as being always under the Sense of his Power and Holiness, as being ever in the Presence of him, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

It is this Sense, which will make Princes become true Fathers of their People: for when they consider, that they stand in the Place of God, the common Father of Mankind; that those, who are made subject to their Power, are the Sons of him, who put the Reins of Government into their Hands; they must needs treat their People like their Children, as conscious to themselves of executing a Father's Power; and knowing, that they should be injurious to him above them, as well as to those below them, should they use his Authority in a Way not suitable to his Character. Could a Prince abuse his Authority, to the gratifying his Lust or Passion, had he this Sense before his Eyes? Could he think it reasonable to make the Power of God execute the corrupt Designs of a Man's Heart? In the private Affairs of Life, there is nothing leaves a fouler Stain upon a good Character, than the Abuse of a Trust, which extends perhaps only to the Guardianship of a few Infants and a small Estate; and yet a Man that  
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## DISCOURSE IV. 85

proves unjust to his Friend in so small a Concern, in neglecting the Interest of the little Family committed to his Care, is looked upon by all, as abandoned to the Sense of Honour and Virtue. The Reason of this Resentment is plain; because every Body sees that the Father left his Friend, his Power and Authority over the Family and Estate, that he might become a Father to them in his Stead: and this is understood to carry with it such an Obligation, that an honest Man is more careful and industrious in the Concerns of others, than oft-times he is in his own. A good Prince governs with the same Sentiments, which are ever suggested to him by the Fear of God: he considers his People, as the Family of the Almighty, over which he is placed by the Appointment of Providence; as Orphans committed to his Care, whose Prosperity and Happiness depend entirely on his Conduct: the Will of God is always the Rule by which he uses the Power of God; and in every Instance of Government, he does the very Thing which he judges God would do, were he personally to determine the Case himself: for a Prince so instructed, seeks not *his own Will*, but *the Will of him who sent him*.



## 86 DISCOURSE IV.

This is a general Account of the Prince's Temper and Disposition, who rules in the Fear of the Lord. If we carry the View through the Particulars of Government, we shall discover more distinctly the happy Influence of this religious Principle.

The royal Authority being the immediate Power of God, has no more immediate Concern, than to promote the Service, and to establish the Honour of God in the Hearts of Men; it is but a natural Tribute for Princes to pay their Maker, to provide that those whom God has made to be their Subjects, should not cease to be his Servants. Besides, this is a Case recommended to them both by their own, and their People's Interest: it is not in the Power of the best Princes, to make all their Subjects equally happy; Poverty and Distress will be the uncomfortable Companions of some, in the most flourishing Kingdoms: but Religion is a Way open to Happiness, to which the Rich and the Poor have equally Admittance; it is that only which can make all Circumstances of Life easy, and is necessary, as well to teach us *how to abound*, as how to *suffer need*: for this Reason then, a Prince concerned for the Happiness of his People, cannot

## DISCOURSE IV. 87

cannot be unconcerned for the Interest of Religion. But further: The Welfare and Prosperity of civil Societies, as such, depend upon the Influence which Religion has upon the Minds and Manners of the People; human Laws are often transgressed with Impunity; often easily evaded; and sometimes, for want of due Execution, they lose their Force and Vigour: but the Law never dies in an Heart seasoned with Religion, and conscious to itself, that it owes Obedience to the Ruler, not only *for Wrath*, but *for Conscience Sake*. Faction sometimes grows too strong for lawful Power; and who then shall refrain the Madness of the People, who already think themselves superior to their Prince, and know none higher than he to be afraid of? Religion only can subdue the wild Passions of Men, and make the Ruler secure against their Attempts; so that in this Sense it may be truly said, that the Throne shall endure for ever, which is established in Righteousness.

These Advantages can never be wanting under the Conduct of a Prince, who governs in the Fear of the Lord: the Sense of his own Duty, and his Regard for the Honour of God, will incline him in all

88 DISCOURSE IV.

Cases to promote and encourage the Service of his Maker; and to fill up that Character, which, when justly sustained, is both the Ornament and Strength of the Crown, *Defender of the Faith*. To such Princes the Church of God owes her temporal Prosperity, her liberal Maintenance, and, in great Measure, even the Purity of her Religion; to such she owes the Temples of God, which are in every Nation the truest Indications of royal Piety and Magnificence: To such Princes——But whither am I going? Methinks, my Country chides me, whilst I deal to such Princes in common those Praises, which seem to be the distinguishing Marks, the Excellencies peculiar to our own. Happy *Britain*! that canst so easily discover the Features of thine own Prince, whenever the Image of a good one is set before thee. Religion indeed is so much both the Practice and the Care of our good Queen, that in this Respect her Enemies (if such a Princess can have Enemies) must confess, that the World has seldom seen her Equal, never her Superior. In the midst of outward Pomp and Glory, how constant, how regular is her Devotion; how just and becoming her Behaviour in the Presence of  
God,

## DISCOURSE IV. 89

God, that even those who attend at the Altar may profit by the Example! With how tender an Eye of Compassion did she regard the Poverty and Distress of the Christian Priesthood; and how did she consult the Honour of God and Religion, providing by her royal Bounty, that the Altar should be attended, not by the Servants of Men waiting for Bread, but by the Freemen of the Lord! Ages to come shall give Glory to God for her, when they shall behold those Monuments of her Piety, which are now but just rising from their Foundations; a Glory that will not be the less hers, though we acknowledge (as in Justice and Gratitude we always must) how readily her faithful Commons enabled her to support the Charge of so expensive an Undertaking.

This Prospect is so pleasant, that here I could delight to dwell; but the Time, which spends much faster than my Subject, bids me proceed.

Let us then take a transient View of the happy Effects of this religious Principle, the Fear of God, in the political Government of a just Prince.

Human Nature is much the same in all Parts of the World; there are the same Passions



## 90 DISCOURSE IV.

sions and Inclinations to be found in Men of different Countries; and therefore it is in vain to search Nature, to find the Causes why some Nations enjoy inward Peace and Tranquillity, whilst others are exposed to Misery and Confusion. The Difference seems to lie in these two Points; the Laws and Constitutions of several Countries, and the Execution of those Laws. Princes, who can forget the Character of their Master, whose Power they exercise, may easily forget the Character of their Subjects, over whose Persons they reign; and though *he that ruleth over Men* ought to be just, because Men are rational Creatures, and have a Right to be governed by the Laws of Reason and Justice; yet it is no Wonder that the Ruler who does not *fear God*, should not *regard Men*. Power and Greatness are in themselves great Temptations, mighty Corrupters of the Heart of Man; and unless there be the Fear of God to restrain those evil Effects of worldly Grandeur, it must happen, that he that has the most Power will be least able to use it well; and consequently Want of Religion in the Prince must always End in the Slavery and Misery of the People. But when a Ruler

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## DISCOURSE IV. 91

acts under the Sense of God's supreme Dominion, and knows that there is no proper legislative Power, but that of the Almighty; that the Part entrusted to him is a Ray issuing from the Divine Fountain; he will so use his Power as not to disgrace the Giver of it, and exert it in Laws and Constitutions, worthy of the great Original from whence they flow: such Laws must always be Honour to the Throne, Safety and Prosperity to the People.

With us the legislative Power is more happily administered than in any known Part of the World; and I may have Leave in this august Assembly, to congratulate with my Country, that she lives under no Law that is not of her own choosing: a Privilege, which is the Glory of *Britain*, purchased with the Blood of our Ancestors, and ought never to be parted with, but together with our own. But how is this Happiness completed, when we have a Princess upon the Throne, as ready to give Life to any Law for the public Good, as her People can be to ask it; who takes no other Pleasure in her Power, but in making it beneficial to her Country; and then only thinks she reigns, when she can do good to Mankind!

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## 92 DISCOURSE IV.

Wholeſome Laws, whatever Tendency they have to public Good, have no Effect, but as they are prudently adminiſtered, and vigorously executed; the Welfare therefore of Kingdoms does in great Meaſure depend upon the ſteady and wiſe Exerciſe of the executive Power: for though the Touch of the Sceptre may animate the Law, and give it Being; yet it is this Power which gives it Energy and Operation, and teaches it how to influence the Lives and Manners of the People; how to make them at once good and happy. In the Management of a corrupt Ruler, it is oftentimes made a Snare to the Lives and Fortunes of the beſt Subjects; but where the Fear of God directs the Prince, the Law is always a Protection to the Innocent, a Terror to the Wicked. In all human Laws there is an Imperfection, which would often make Juſtice degenerate into Cruelty, were not the Rigour of the Letter left ſubject to be moderated by the Reaſon and Equity of the Governor; for it being impoſſible to form a Rule that ſhall regard all the various Circumſtances that attend human Actions, the Law can in many Caſes conſider one Action but in one Light, and annexes the ſame Punishment to the

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## DISCOURSE IV. 93

the same Crime, wherever found, not considering what it cannot foresee, the Aggravations or Alleviations which may arise from the Circumstances of Offenders : and yet in the Eye of Reason and Equity there is no truer Maxim than this, *Duo cum faciunt idem, non est idem* ; from whence it comes to pass, that oftentimes the material Action, and the moral Action, that is, the Action considered in all its Circumstances, are in one and the same Instance of different Kinds ; in which Case the Letter of the Law may find a Crime, where Reason and Equity can find no Criminal ; or at least not one deserving to suffer the Severity of the Law. This is the proper Field for the Exercise of royal Mercy ; for arbitrary Mercy, that does not regard the Offender's Merit, is rather Humour than Goodness, and is destructive of the Constitution ; whereas true Mercy always supplies the Defects of it : for the Mercy of the Prince is not opposed to the Cruelty of the Law (for the Law has no Intention to be cruel), but it comes in to relieve the Law against the Imperfections to which all human Constitutions are subject. Justice herself is blind, and wants the royal Touch, which gives  
her



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her the Eyes of Mercy to distinguish between the Crimes of Malice and Inadvertency.

From this View of the executive Power, it is easy to judge how great the Difference is between a Prince who rules in the Fear of the Lord, and one who has not God in all his Thoughts. Even Mercy, the choicest Flower of the Crown, and which has the kindest Aspect on the Subject, may in an ill Hand become oppressive to the People; and so it always does when it is used to countenance or protect the Wicked against Justice; and to set those who do not love the Law, above the Fear of it: but when the Sword of Justice is sent forth, not to execute the Will of Man, or serve his Passions, but to purge the Land from Iniquity, and to root out Oppression from the Earth; when Mercy follows close behind, to screen the ignorant, the inadvertent, the unfortunate Offenders, who sinned not out of malicious Wickedness, from the rigorous Blows of Justice; then may it properly be said, that *Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.*

I should injure the Character of our excellent Queen, should I seem to labour in the  
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## DISCOURSE IV. 95

Application of these Praises to her, which are so much her own, that I doubt not but every one here has been beforehand with me, in blessing God for these rare Endowments of his Princess. Some Reigns, however full of Glory, yet give us a secret Horror, when we see our Annals stained with the richest Blood of the three Kingdoms; when we see the Sword always naked, but cannot discern the Hand that guides it, and are left doubtful whether it strikes the Blows of Justice or Resentment. But Posterity shall find no such Pain in reading the History of these Times, which will appear as one continued Scene of Glory and Happiness, and shine like the *Morning Light when the Sun riseth, even like the Morning that has no Clouds*. And this leads me in the second Place to consider,

2. How great a Blessing a just Prince is to his People, which is represented, in the Text, under the Similitudes of the rising Sun, and the flourishing Grass springing out of the Earth.

Good Laws duly executed are as much the Happiness of the People, as they are the Support of the Crown; without them, Liberty would be our Ruin, and, instead of enjoying

96 DISCOURSE IV.

enjoying our *Freedom*, we should perish in our *Licentiousness*; for Liberty does not consist in being free from all Restraints; if it did, the wild Inhabitants on the Coast of *Africa* might more justly boast of their Liberty, than we do. Civil Liberty is the Child of the Law, and thrives best under the Guardianship of its Parent; and therefore a just Prince, as he will most regard the Law, will always be the best Patron of his People's Liberty; such a Prince has no separate Interest from his Country; he looks upon himself as the Head of the Body; and if any Member grieves, he suffers with it: he can never cast an envious Eye upon the Privileges of his People, which he esteems as his own, and values even as the Jewels of his Crown. How happy are the People who are in such a Case; how blessed is the Nation whose Prince *feareth God*!

For, further, the very Example of such a Ruler has a natural Tendency to promote the Peace and Welfare of the Kingdom. When Virtue shines from the Throne, it warms the Hearts of all below it, and the Advantage of the Station gives it an Influence not to be resisted; Religion in the Height of Greatness is an amiable Sight, and

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## DISCOURSE IV. 97

and the People will insensibly learn to imitate what they cannot help admiring. Would it not teach the haughtiest Mind Humility, to see Majesty itself lie prostrate at the Altar, imploring the Divine Assistance with such a Sense of its Dependence, as is but rarely found in the lowest Fortune? Must it not shame us into mutual Kindness and Benevolence, when we see with how uncommon a Love the Princess embraces all her Subjects, even the worst deserving; imitating the Example of Divine Mercy, which makes the *Sun to rise both on the Just and on the Unjust*? Can the People refuse Submission to such a Prince? Can they scruple to follow the Law as the Rule of their Obedience, which they see their Princess submitting to as the Rule of her Government.

*Lastly*, There is one Thing more, which comprehends in it all that a Nation can wish for, and which always attends the Government of a just Prince; I mean the Blessing and Protection of Heaven. As Kings are the immediate Ministers of God, so are they his immediate Care; he ruleth both their Hearts and their Hands, and turneth them as seemeth best to his Wisdom. It is easy for him to punish the Wickedness of a Prince

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## 98 DISCOURSE IV.

and his People, by making foolish the Wisdom of their wise Men, and only suffering them to choose their own Destruction ; it is as easy to reward the Good, by establishing the Heart of the Prince in Council and in Wisdom, and guiding him insensibly into the Road of Honour and Prosperity. Time would fail me to set before you the Instances of God's Judgments and Mercies. Those of the former Sort (blessed be his Name) have no Relation to *this Day* ; and for the latter, you might justly blame me, should I search for foreign or for distant Examples, when our *own Country* and our *own Times* furnish us with such ample Materials : *This Day*, as it is my *Subject*, so shall it be my *Witness* also ; and I need call no other to prove the Happiness of a People, whose Prince ruleth *in the Fear of God*.

The Virtues of the Royal Blood of *Britain* were never more amiably possessed than now, when the *Majesty* of the Crown is displayed in the *Softness* of her Sex who wears it, and seems rather to invite than to command Obedience : so equally are the Graces mixed, that her Authority creates no Terror, her Mildness no Contempt ; so tender is she of the Privileges of her People,  
that

## DISCOURSE IV. 99

that the Nation must ever praise her; so just to the Rights of the Crown, that her Successors will never blame her. Her Reign in every Respect has been so just a Transcript of the Constitution, that Time perhaps may make it doubtful, whether our excellent Constitution were not a Copy drawn from the Example of her Government.

If the State may thus rejoice in the Care of her Princess, the *Church* has equal Right to boast of her Protection. Our Queen was born within her Pale, and learnt betimes to know and love her: when the Fears of Popery surrounded her, and when every Prospect, wherever she turned her Eyes, was dark and gloomy; when some who *wore* her Honours, *forsook* her Cause, and some silently lamented her Condition; in that Day of her Distress, our Princess disliked her not, but followed the *worst* of her Fortunes, till the Wisdom of Providence has raised her at last to become the Author of her *best*, to be a nursing Mother to the Church and all her Children.

Whilst *Britain* has been thus cherished, thus happy at Home, under the Influence of a mild Government, she has not been less glorious abroad, extending her victorious

100 DISCOURSE IV.

Arms to every Country, either to protect her Friends, or to subdue her Foes. We had been so long unaccustomed to Success, that it was thought a Conquest not to be subdued; a Triumph, to defend ourselves: the *British* Victory seemed to pine for her ancient Heroes, her *Harrys*, and her *Edwards*, and scarcely lived upon the faded Honours of *Cressy* Field and *Agincourt*, till the Genius of *this Day* arose, and taught her once more to gather fresh Laurels in distant Countries. To such a Height of Glory has this *Female* Reign arrived, such Honour and such Triumphs has it brought our Nation, that should any future *King* prove unfortunate, *Britain* perhaps, grown superstitious upon the Successes of her *Queen*, will wish, *He had been a Woman*.

But great as these Successes were, yet still they brought a Grief with them, which easily found its Way to a compassionate Heart: the *Queen* could not hear of Victory without lamenting the Loss of her brave Countrymen, without pitying even her conquered Foes; and so tender a Regard has she for Mankind, that notwithstanding all these Honours of the Field, she reckons it the Glory of her Reign, that she has  
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# DISCOURSE IV. 101

stopped even the Triumph of her Arms, by Peace: and gave the harassed Nations leave to respire.

One Thing only she wants to complete her Happiness, to see her Subjects unite in Love and mutual Confidence; to see those Heats and Animosities buried in Oblivion, which threaten the Peace of our *Israel*. But why do I sully the Glories of this Day, with mention of our Divisions, those Wounds of our Country, at which her best Life flows out, and leaves her sickly in the very Season of her Youth, and whilst all her Honours bloom fresh around her? How earnestly has the Queen commanded, exhorted, entreated, nay even begged of you to forget your Resentments? And could you but offer up to her the Quarrels of your Country, it would be a more welcome Present, than should you lay the Treasures of both *Indies* at her Feet.

Thus happy in the Affections of her Queen, *Britain* must ever think of her with Joy and Pleasure: and yet one Circumstance there is that *often* gives her Pain, *always* when she reflects, that her Princess is mortal; witness, her late Distraction, when uncertain Fame variously reported her Princess's



102 DISCOURSE IV.

Illness. Not *Rome* was more dismayed when *Hannibal* was at her Gates; every Thing was Fear and Confusion, and Men began to look suspiciously on each other, as if in every Face they had seen a Foe; the *Treasury of the City*, one would have thought was plundering; and yet no Enemy was near, but *Britain* in her Disorder was preying on herself.

Blessed be the Power, the Almighty Power, that has dispelled these Fears! Let every Heart be lifted up in Praise to his holy Name, who hath given Life and Salvation to his Servant, and hath not *denied the Request of her Lips*.

And yet when she *requested* Life, it was for her Country's Sake, and not her own; her Mortality is what she oftener and more willingly thinks on than we do; and whenever she does, finds nothing to disturb her Mind, but the Concern for her People, who will be left behind her: a Concern that has more than once been expressed in the most generous Regard to Posterity, by providing for the future Peace and Happiness of these Kingdoms, in the Settlement of the Crown on the ILLUSTRIOUS HOUSE OF HANOVER. A Blessing, for which the Nation  
can

## DISCOURSE IV. 103

can never be thankful enough. But it raises an Indignation unbecoming *this Day*, to hear *some* pleading their Affection to this happy Settlement, as a Mark and Distinction of their Party; a Settlement, which is undeniably our common Good, and, I trust also, our common Care. But let no Prospect of distant Happiness, how entertaining soever, render us insensible of the present Good we enjoy; but let every Wish that looks to the Succession, center in this Point, *that we may never see it; that our Country may never lose it*: whilst *we* live, may *this Day* return (and whilst it does return, it always will) with fresh Honour: but when we are forgot; when she, who is our Glory, is called to a better Throne, may late Posterity enjoy the Fruits of her Care, in deriving the Crown upon so noble a Family. As long as our Wishes are confined within these Limits, there is no Reason to make a *Secret* of our Affections to the Protestant Succession; it is an Affection which every Lover of his Country ought frankly to proclaim; which is the proper Way of keeping this *common Concern* from becoming a *Party Cause*; and stilling those Fears and Jealousies, which are destructive of our Peace and Happiness.

104 DISCOURSE IV.

May he, who stilleth the raging of the Seas, and the Noise of their Waves, and the Tumult of the People, send us Peace and Concord, and Minds capable of enjoying the Blessings which he has so plentifully showered on us: and to complete our Happiness, may he add Length of Days to our Gracious Sovereign, and continue her to be a Comfort to her People, till she shall as far surpass the *oldest* of her Predecessors, in *Number of Years*, as she has already outdone the *bravest*, in *Honour and Glory*.

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## DISCOURSE V.

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### ACTS vii. 25.

*For he supposed his Brethren would have understood how that God by his Hand would deliver them; but they understood not.*

**T**HE Text is Part of the dying Speech of St. *Stephen*, which he delivered to the High Priest and the People, just before he was offered up a glorious Sacrifice for the Truth of the Gospel of Christ. The Design of it was to set before the People of *Israel* the History of their Redemption from Slavery and Idolatry, and to stir them up to attend to the present Offers of Peace through Christ Jesus, by shewing them the fatal Mistakes they had often made in despising or abusing former Mercies. *Moses*  
was



## 106 DISCOURSE V.

was their great Prophet and their Lawgiver ; *Moses* was in the highest Veneration among them ; for his Sake, and to preserve the Authority of his Laws, they refused to hearken to any other Teacher ; and therefore rejected the Gospel as tending to subvert the Constitutions of *Moses*. Yet how was this Man received ? How was this Deliverer entertained ? Was he not evil-intreated ? Was he not, before he could work their Deliverance, forced to seek his own by an hasty Flight from them into the Land of *Midian* ? When he appeared in the Spirit of the Lord, to avenge the Wrongs of his People, and smote the *Egyptian* who oppressed the *Israelite*, the very next Day he was reproached by his Brethren for the Murder, as they called it : for he had given them a Provocation which it seems they could not bear ; he *had shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are Brethren ; why do ye wrong one to another ?* So far did the private Passions and Resentments prevail against the Considerations of public Safety, that delivering them from the *Egyptians* was no Merit, because he endeavoured also to deliver them from one another.

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## DISCOURSE V. 107

To draw Parallels between the Histories in Scripture, and those of our own Times, is so slippery a Subject, so liable to be influenced by the Passions of the Speaker, who can easily overlook the Circumstances which suit not with his View, choose out and adorn those which do; that in such Applications of Scripture History, there is very great Danger of missing the Scripture Doctrine, and publishing our own partial Sentiments, under the Cover of the Book of God, which was given to correct and amend them. I shall therefore, without trying to shew you how like we are in all Respects, or in any, to the People of *Israel*; or how nearly our Enemies resemble the *Egyptians*; confine myself to such Observations, and such Applications of them, as naturally arise from the Text and our own Circumstances.

First then, we may observe from the Text, that *Moses*, though raised by God in a wonderful Manner to be the Deliverer of his People, yet fell under great Discouragements from his Countrymen for whose Sake he was raised up.

The People of *Israel*, at the Time of the Birth of *Moses*, were under so severe a Bondage,

## 108 DISCOURSE V.

dage, that there was no human Prospect of Deliverance: those who were of Strength sufficient, were held to such constant and hard Labour, that they had neither Time nor Ability to contrive any Thing for themselves. Could it be expected that any Genius should arise from among the Brick-kilns, to restore the Liberty of *Israel*; or that one employed from his Childhood in gathering Straw should attempt to set up the promised Kingdom? And that mere Strength and Number might not prevail, the *Egyptians* had taken care to destroy the Male Children of *Israel*; so that the Prospect for the next Generation was even worse than what the present had. But the Providence of God turned these Circumstances to his own wise Ends. Had not the King of *Egypt* commanded the Male Children to be destroyed, *Moses*, it is probable, had been bred as he was born, a Slave, and sent, as soon as he was able, to take his Share of the hard Labour imposed on his Countrymen: but by being exposed for Fear of the cruel King's Command, he fell into the Hands of the Princess of *Egypt*, and had his Education even in the Court of *Pharaoh*, and became learned in all the Wisdom of

## DISCOURSE V. 109

*of the Egyptians, and was mighty in Words and Deeds.* By this Means he was qualified to undertake the great Work which God had prepared for him; and *Israel*, though in the lowest Condition, had one to go before them, who had been brought up in the Dignity of a Prince; and yet though he had lived in the Plenty of *Egypt*, and flourished in the Court of its great King, he forgot not his distressed Countrymen, but he partook in all their Miseries, with an Affection which became him who was one Day to be their Deliverer. One would think that these Circumstances, together with the Prophecies relating to their Deliverance, should have pointed out the Person intended by God to bring about their Redemption: *Moses* himself thought he should at least have been favoured by his Countrymen in his noble Enterprize for their Service; *he supposed his Brethren would have understood how that God by his Hand would deliver them:* but, as it follows in the Text, *they understood not.* This was so discouraging a Circumstance, that he seems to have laid aside the Thoughts of being able to serve them; he found, that to accomplish the Deliverance of *Israel*, he must struggle as well against the



## 110 DISCOURSE V.

the *Israelite*, as the *Egyptian*, and subdue the Slaves in order to their Redemption, as well as the Tyrants who oppressed them. And yet notwithstanding this Blindness of the People, the Murderer, as they called him, was ordained by God to be their Prince and Deliverer; and they were at last happily convinced of their Mistake, by receiving at his Hand the Blessings promised to their Forefathers.

From whence we may learn, in the second Place, what Confidence and Trust we ought to put in God for the Deliverance of his Church and true Religion, notwithstanding the hopeless Prospects which arise from human Affairs.

Had we been to judge by the Rules of human Wisdom and Policy, what Hope was there that *Moses* should be the Deliverer of that People, in whom he had so little Interest, that he was forced to fly from them for his own Safety? But the Counsels of God are not to be defeated either by the Folly or the Madness of the People; and his Purposes shall stand, be those whom he intends to punish never so furious or outrageous, or those whom he intends to save never so weak and blind to their own Interest.

## DISCOURSE V. III

terest. And indeed, were such great Events to be guided by human Counsels, a Nation might be destroyed before they could agree in what Method, or by what Means to be saved ; so variously are Men drawn by their Passions and their Interest, that it is very difficult for them to concur in preserving what all are equally concerned to preserve. In these Circumstances, it is very natural for Men to dwell upon the melancholy Prospect, and to forebode that Ruin to themselves and their Country, which seems to be the just Consequence of such distracted Counsels: but they ought to reflect, that there is one higher than all, who can still the Rage of the People, and bring Peace and Safety out of Tumult and Disorder, with as much Ease as he produced Light out of Darkness, when he said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light.* Were it not for the Comfort arising from this providential Care of God over the World, the best Thing a Wise Man could do for himself, would be to get out of it as soon as he could ; the only Way to secure himself from the Miseries and Calamities which Men by their Folly and their Wickedness are perpetually drawing down upon themselves and others. Nay, could

## 112 DISCOURSE V.

could we depend upon this Care and Protection of God no further than our own Merits would justify our Expectation, we might have Reason still to despond. But as there is another Time in which all Men shall yield an Account of their own Doings; and as God has greater Views oftentimes in saving and destroying Nations, than punishing or rewarding the present Inhabitants; and as Mercy and Goodness incline him to deal graciously with Sinners, in allowing them further Means and Opportunities of Repentance and Amendment, we may reasonably hope from his Mercy and Goodness to be more favourably dealt with, than our Consciences, if strictly examined, can give us Ground to expect. And if ever these Hopes are justifiable, then most certainly they are, when the Honour of God is immediately concerned in the Event; and when the Truth of that holy Religion which Christ sealed with his own Blood, is Part of the Controversy. The People of *Israel* had as little to boast of on their own Behalf as other Nations; but they were chosen by God to bear his Name, to be Witnesses of his Truth in the dark Ages of the World, to prepare the Way for the coming of

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DISCOURSE V. 113

of our Lord and Master; and though they were often afflicted, yet they were as often restored, till at last they were utterly rejected for denying that great Prophet, for whose Sake, and for the Completion of the Prophecies relating to him, they had been so often and so long preserved.

These are the Observations I had to make to you from the Words of the Text. The Application of them to ourselves, is what I believe every Body sees, as well as myself. And yet I beg your Patience, whilst with all Truth and Sincerity I discharge my Duty and Conscience as a Minister of this reformed Church, now openly attacked by its professed and inveterate Enemies. Since the Beginning of the Reformation in this Kingdom, we never had so good a Prospect of a firm Establishment of the Protestant Religion, as at this Time; and yet I verily think we never had less Sense of it; our Deliverance is near us, but we understand it not. Whilst we have been striving together about Things, however dear to us, yet still of less Consequence most certainly than our Liberty and Religion, we have been in Danger of being swallowed up by the common Enemy; and the People, never till now insen-

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## 114 DISCOURSE V.

sible of the Fears of Popery, have stood by unconcerned, seeming, as it were, to invite that Slavery and Oppression, which cost their Forefathers so much Blood and Treasure to get rid of. Could you have thought that this Soil, so often watered and enriched by the Blood of Martyrs, shed by the cruel Hands of Popish Tyranny, so often miraculously saved by Providence from *Roman* Slavery and Superstition, would ever yield such Fruit as this? That *England*, famed throughout the World for the Bulwark of the Protestant Religion; hated by her Enemies, and envied even by her Friends, for the best established Church in *Christendom*, should so far forget herself, and the God who saved her, as to look with any Patience upon those Chains from which she was so lately delivered. It is still more surprising, that this should happen at the very Time when Providence seems to have laid the best Foundation for our Peace and Security, by settling a Protestant Prince in the Throne of these Kingdoms, happy in Heirs to succeed him in his Crowns, and to perpetuate the Blessing of Liberty and pure Religion to these Nations. Whatever we think of this Advantage, our Enemies certainly

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## DISCOURSE V. 115

tainly judge right of it; they foresee, that if this Settlement prevails, their Hopes are at an End, and therefore they are ready to hazard all to disturb and overthrow it: and it seems to have been the main Point of the Policy of the Court of *Rome*, with Respect to these Kingdoms, from the earliest Times of the Reformation, to secure themselves against a Succession of Protestant Princes. When we have had a Prospect of this Happiness, then we have been attacked with their utmost Fury; *Rome* has plyed all her Engines to prevent this Foundation being laid amongst us, of lasting Peace and Security. At other Times, when the Succession has been doubtful, and she had any Hopes of seeing one of her own Communion exalted, she has moved by gentler Steps, and her Fury has been abated by the Hope of swaying the Sceptre of a Son of her own.

If we take a short View of this Period, it will help not only to convince us of the Truth of this Observation, but also to give us a just Prospect of the Security and Happiness, which are now prepared for us, if we do not obstinately shut our Eyes against the Things which make for our Peace.

The Reformation had its first Rise here

## 116 DISCOURSE V.

in the Days of *Henry* the Eighth; he went so far as to throw out the Pope, though at the same Time he zealously maintained Popery. The first Breach happened upon the Point of the King's Divorce; and though the Court of *Rome* treated it as a Matter of Law and Conscience, and sent it about to their Canonists and Divines, yet were they in Truth guided by mere politic Views: the Queen was nearly related to the Emperor; and *Germany* was then in such a State, many of its Princes having received the Reformation, that *Cæsar's* Power was never more wanted, nor more courted by *Rome*. In this Difficulty the Pope chose rather to hazard losing the King, than the Emperor: and the King, impatient of the ill Usage and artificial Delays of *Rome*, took a shorter Way to his Divorce, and threw off all Subjection to the Pope. Yet in his Days he maintained himself and Kingdoms in tolerable Peace and Quiet: the Court of *Rome* had Reason not to drive to the utmost Extremity; Popery still remained in its most essential Parts; a fair Inlet some Time or other to a Return of the Papal Power. It was doubtful also what Issue the new Queen might have; and the next in Appearance

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## DISCOURSE V. 117

was tied not only to Popery, but to the Pope also, upon the Plenitude of whose Power her own Legitimacy depended. When the King had a Son born, yet still there were the Casualties of Childhood to support their Hopes, and a Prospect of an Infancy in the Throne, which could not but afford Opportunities of practising on the Kingdom for their own Advantage. In the young King's Time the Reformation was pushed with Vigour; but alas, his Days were few, and *Rome* had all his Time the Prospect of a Popish Successor, which did not only support her Hopes, but in some Measure abate her Fury. When Queen *Mary* came to the Throne, then was the Time to see with what Spirit Popery is to be restored in these Kingdoms: the Flames of Persecution were kindled in all Parts; the Bishops, the Clergy, and the People fell promiscuously a Sacrifice to the enraged Deity of *Rome*: nay, so far did the Fury of these Barbarians extend, that the helpless Infant, forced from the Mother's Womb by the Extremity of her Torture, was thrown into the Flames again, as guilty of the Parent's Heresy, and under the Sentence of the Holy Court, which had condemned the Mother without



## 118 DISCOURSE V.

excepting her Womb. It would be endless to relate to you the fiery Trials of that Time, when no Age, no Sex found Mercy; but old and young, Men and Women were led in Triumph to the Stake, and were forced to seal the Confession of their Faith with their dearest Blood; and yet at that Time there was a *Woman* in the Throne, in herself not cruel, and by the Tenderneſs of her Sex inclined to Compaſſion; ſhe was alſo obliged to her Country, which reſcued her from a Rebellion, formed in the very Beginning of her Reign, and placed her on the Throne of her Anceſtors in Spite of Oppoſition: but neither the Tenderneſs of her Sex, nor her natural Compaſſion, nor the Senſe of Gratitude, could prevail againſt a Popiſh Confefſor, who firſt miſguided her Conſcience, and then by her Conſcience over-ruled all the Sentiments of Nature and Humanity. If a Woman could do all this; if one obliged by her Country could be ſo unnatural in her Returns to it, what have we to expect from one, who, if ever he comes, will come with Anger and Reſentment againſt his Country; who muſt be ſet on the Throne by the Treafure and Power of *Rome*, which muſt be repaid in the

## DISCOURSE V. 119

the Blood of Hereticks; that is, in the Blood of the People of *England*? But to proceed.

The main Policy of this Reign was to secure such a Succession of Princes as might for ever dash the Hopes of the Reformation in *England*: and for this Purpose the wisest Step was taken, that human Policy could contrive: *Spain* was the only Kingdom of *Europe* not tainted with Heresy (as the Reformation is called); its King was young, and bigotted to the Superstition of *Rome*, and therefore chosen out as a proper Match for the Queen of *England*; and had that Marriage produced Heirs according to the Hopes of our Enemies, *England*, it is probable, had been at this Time as deeply plunged in the Darknes of Popery, as *Spain* itself; where Superstition and Idolatry appear in more ghastly Forms, than they do even at *Rome*, where the Court of Inquisition sits in the fullest Triumph, and scatters Death and Destruction throughout the Realm. But the Hope of Issue failing, together with the Queen's Life, the glorious Princess *Elizabeth* ascended the Throne, and the Reformation began once more to breathe in *England*. In the Beginning of her Reign, Hopes were

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## 120 DISCOURSE V.

conceived by the Popish Faction, that she might match with a Prince of their Communion, and their darling *Philip* was prevailed on to offer himself. But the Queen was too wise to match with a Prince, where the Legitimacy of the Marriage must have proved the Illegitimacy of her Birth; since she could have had her Sister's Husband only in Virtue of that Power by which her Father had his Brother's Wife. After *Philip*, several others were proposed; but these Hopes failing, the *Roman Catholicks*, who had hitherto been permitted to join with the established Church, to keep the Way open to an easier Reconcilement, were by the Power of the Pope entirely separated. In the Queen's old Age, when the Thoughts of her marrying were laid aside, and the Hopes of a Popish Successor in great Measure defeated by the Fate of the Queen of *Scots*, there was an Attempt from the same Quarter to set up a *Spanish* Prince for Successor, that they might obtain by Birth-right what they could not obtain by Marriage; and a Book full of Learning was published by *Parsons* the Jesuit, to make out the *Infanta's* Title to these Crowns; so well did they understand, that nothing less than the

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## DISCOURSE V. 121

the greatest Power could be sufficient to introduce the worst Religion. By all which Steps, through these several Reigns, it plainly appears, that the utmost Desire of the Court of *Rome* is to have a Popish Prince on this Throne; they reckon their Work done, if once they obtain this Point: give them but a Popish Prince to their Heart, they will soon instruct him what to do with Vows and Promises, and Coronation-Oaths; and in such a Case the People likewise would be instructed to know their own Interest, when it was too late to help themselves.

When *James* the First came to the Crown, surrounded by an hopeful Issue of Protestant Princes, the Cause of Popery was at the last Gasps: they saw their Downfall if this Family stood, in which there was a Prospect of a long Succession of Protestant Heirs. A desperate Case requires desperate Remedies; here was no Room for Art and Management, and therefore Violence was now first used, and the horrid Plot of the *Fifth of November* was contrived, which, had it took Effect, would have rid them not only of a Protestant King, but of their greatest Fear, the Protestant Heirs.

By what Methods they afterwards distressed



## 122 DISCOURSE V.

treffed the King, and laid the Foundation of that Ruin which broke out in his Son's Time, to the Destruction of this Church and Nation, and one of the best Princes it ever had, would be tedious to relate. Nor need I say much of the succeeding Reigns, which so nearly resemble the former, that from the Restoration to our present gracious King, the Case seems to be much the same as it was from the Reformation to *James* the First. King *Charles* the Second had no Issue; and if he was not himself a Papist, his Successor was, in whose Time this Church and Nation were brought to the Brink of Ruin: and though he had been saved from a Bill of Exclusion by the Interests and Loyalty of the Church, yet no sooner was he on the Throne, but he imprisoned her Bishops, dispensed with her Laws, and broke down all the Fences that were raised for her Security; in which Confusion she had utterly perished, had not the Providence of God rescued her by the Means of a Protestant Prince, happily allied to the Crown of *England* by Marriage, and by Birth. In his and his Successor's Time, the Eyes of the Popish Faction were upon the Pretender to the Crown, and all their Hopes centered

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## DISCOURSE V. 123

tered in him. As long as there was any Prospect of defeating the Protestant Succession, they kept themselves within Bounds, and were contented to work by Policy, and not by Force: but no sooner did they see a King of the reformed Communion, with a numerous Issue mounted on the Throne, but they threw off the Mask; as they did in the like Case of *James* the First, attempted directly his Destruction and Ruin. And will not all this teach us wherein our true Interest does consist? *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*: if we cannot judge for ourselves, let us learn of our Enemies to know wherein to place our Security. The two greatest Efforts of Popery to bring Ruin upon this Church and Nation by Force and Violence, have been, one at this Time, the other in *James* the First's Reign; and their great Provocation was, to see a Succession of Protestant Princes likely to be established among us. As this is their Fear, so is it our Security. And if we consider the Circumstances of Times past, the doubtful Condition we have often been in, when our Happiness has depended on one single Life, we shall have Reason to think that Providence has both wisely and mercifully provided for our Safety at this Time.

## 124 DISCOURSE V.

Time. When the Family of *James* the First was partly corrupted with Popery, and near being extinguished for want of Heirs, how providentially did God preserve one Branch free from the Infection, from which the present royal Family is descended! And yet, to come to that which is the melancholy Part of the Application, how insensible do we seem to be of this Blessing! What Rebellions, what Tumults and Riots have we seen in the short Compass of this Reign! as if the People had forgot not only the Care of their King, but of their Country, their Religion, and themselves: as if the Fears of Popery were all vain; as if Superstition and Idolatry, and the very Terrors of an Inquisition, were the mere Delusions of a sick Mind. These are the Blessings which some are contending for; these will be the Rewards of their pious Undertaking to set up a Popish Prince over these Kingdoms.

It is an easier Matter to kindle the Fires of Popery and Persecution, than it will be to extinguish them. Should the Withes of some take Place, and a Popish Prince prevail over us; and should he not be so good as they vainly expect he will, where will they

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## DISCOURSE V. 125

they go next for Protection? What Prince or Family in *Europe* is left, to which they may fly for Succour? The Protestant Religion has its last Support; if it fails now, there is no other Refuge; and should it be once lost in *England*, it will dwindle every where else; Popery will over-run all like a Torrent, and we shall return to a worse Darkneſs, than that from which we came out. If therefore we have any Senſe of Loyalty to our preſent gracious King; if we have not quite forgot that Obedience upon which we have ſo long valued ourſelves; if we have any Concern for our Religion and the Welfare of our Souls, which depends on it; if we have any natural Affection for our Country, our Friends, our Families, or ourſelves; let us ſhew it by a cheerful and ſteady Obedience to the Prince whom God has ſet over us. All theſe Motives plead not ſo much for him as for ourſelves: for if ever Obedience to their Prince was the true Intereſt of a People, now is the Time it is ſo.

The ſecond Obſervation I made to you, was, that notwithſtanding the hopeleſs Proſpect of human Affairs, the Text affords Ground of Dependence on God.

In



## 126 DISCOURSE V.

In this Part of our Case, the Application, I bless God, is made to my Hands. His Care over us has already appeared, and we are like to be saved whether we desire it or no.

Let us then raise our Hearts to a just Sense of our Deliverance, that we may unfeignedly adore his holy Name for all his Mercies; and let us strive together to promote his Glory by a constant and stedfast Adherence to the Church established, by a dutiful and ready Submission to our Prince, and by Love and Charity one among another.

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## DISCOURSE VI.

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MATT. iv. 17.

*From that Time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.*

THE Design of this Meeting being to promote the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign Parts; and the Success of this Work depending on such Methods as human Prudence can suggest, now left destitute of those miraculous Assistances, which the Church of Christ in her Infancy enjoyed; the Occasion will naturally suggest to your Thoughts, the Consideration of the Encouragements and Difficulties which attend this Undertaking; and of the Methods proper to attain this End, so much to be desired by every good and pious Christian:

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## 128 DISCOURSE VI.

but yet, since I succeed much abler Men, who have gone before me in the Performance of this Duty, and have with great Judgment considered these necessary Points; since also I stand at present before so many much abler, whose Thoughts have long dwelt upon this important Subject; I beg Leave to decline the unequal Task, and to spend the Time allotted me in considering upon what Foot the Gospel first set out in the World, when it was published by our blessed Saviour and his Apostles; and what it had to recommend it to the Reason of Mankind, abstracted from those Signs and Wonders, which were wrought by the Hand of God for its Confirmation.

The holy Evangelist tells us, that the first Doctrine which our blessed Lord taught, was that of Repentance; *From that Time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: That he taught it as necessary to qualify Men for the Kingdom of Heaven; Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.* What is to be understood by the *Kingdom of Heaven's being at Hand*, may be learnt from the parallel Place in St. Mark, chap. i. 14, 15. *Now after that John was put in Prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching*  
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## DISCOURSE VI. 129

*the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, The Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at Hand: Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.* Now whatever we understand by *the Kingdom of Heaven*, it is plain that the Reason why it was said to be at Hand, was because the Time was fulfilled, for the publishing the Gospel to all the World; and that the Exhortation in St. Matthew, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*, is the same with that recorded in St. Mark, *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.* From whence it is evident, that Repentance was inculcated, as necessary to prepare us for receiving the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

The same appears likewise, from the preaching of *John the Baptist*, who taught the same Doctrine, and in the same Words with our blessed Saviour; he was that *Voice crying in the Wilderness, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make his Paths straight.* As it was his proper Office to prepare the World for the Reception of the great Prophet, who was to come after him, we may certainly conclude from his Preaching, what was the necessary Preparation required; and as his Doctrine was confined to the single Point of Repentance, this was undoubtedly the necessary

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## 130 DISCOURSE VI.

cessary Qualification for all who were to receive the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

As our Saviour, and his Forerunner the Baptist, taught Repentance as the first necessary Step to the Gospel; so also did the Apostles. When the Twelve were sent out by our blessed Lord in the 6th of *St Mark*, the Evangelist tells us in the 12th Verse, that *they went out and preached, that Men should repent*: *St. Peter*, in his first Sermon recorded in the 2d of the *Acts*, exhorts his Countrymen to *repent, and be baptized, for the Remission of Sins*, Verse 38. And in the 20th of the *Acts*, *St. Paul* tells us how he had spent his Time, *testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*, Verse 21st; which were the very Topics insisted on by our Lord, when he called upon Men to *repent* and to *believe the Gospel*. The same Account he gives of his preaching to King *Agrippa*, *Acts* xxvi. 20. namely, that he had shewed both to *Jew and Gentile, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance*. In the 11th of the *Acts* it is said, that the Apostles and Brethren in *Judea* heard that *the Gentiles also had received the*

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## DISCOURSE VI. 131

*Word of God.* St. Peter was called upon to render an Account of his Conduct, in communicating the Privileges of the Gospel to the Gentiles: when he had vindicated himself to their Satisfaction, they thus expressed themselves: *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.* Now it is evident, that what God granted to the Gentiles, was the same that the Gentiles received, and therefore *Repentance unto Life* was the *Word of God*, published to the World by our Lord and his Apostles; and for this Reason, the Writer to the *Hebrews* reckons Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards God, to be the first Principles, or main Foundation of the Doctrine of Christ. *Heb. vi. 1.*

Before I proceed to lay before you the Consequences, which arise from this State of the Case, I beg leave to make an Observation or two, in Order to clear the Way for what is to follow: You may observe then, that Repentance was the very first Thing insisted on, wherever the Gospel was published, before any new Law or Doctrine was promulged, or so much as mentioned. The Proof of this I need not attempt, since the Passages already produced

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do plainly contain it, and indeed the Nature of the Thing speaks it; for the Repentance taught, could not respect any new Law to be delivered to the World, against which no Offence having been committed, no Repentance could be required.

Secondly, That the Gospel was ushered in by the Doctrine of Repentance, not only when it was delivered to the *Jew*, but also when it was proclaimed to the *Gentile* World. The *Jews* lived under the Divine Law, delivered by *Moses*, and were guilty of many Offences committed against that Law, to which they owed Obedience: but the *Gentiles* were not under that Law, nor had they been ever called to the Obedience of it; and therefore the Repentance which was taught, as the Introduction of the Gospel, did not regard any particular Institution, but that general Law of Nature, to which every Man owed Obedience, in Virtue of the Reason and Understanding, with which God had endowed him.

Thirdly, That true Repentance requires Change of Mind, and leads to a Reformation of Manners, and a due Obedience for the future to that Law of Righteousness, against which the Offence was committed:

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## DISCOURSE VI. 133

for where the Obligation of Obedience to any Law ceases, there can be no Call to Repentance for Disobedience. This Doctrine is so plain in Scripture, and so uniformly taught by all the Ministers of our Church, that I would willingly suppose no one ignorant of it. The Baptist sufficiently explained himself, exhorting such as came to his Baptism, *to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*: to which general Instruction his particular Admonitions always correspond. To the hard-hearted and uncharitable *Jews*, he said, *He that bath two Coats, let him impart to him that bath none; and he that bath Meat, let him do likewise*. To the Publicans, whose Crime was Extortion, he said, *Exact no more than that which is appointed you*. To the Soldiers, who were noted for Rapine, false Information, and the like Vices, he said, *Do Violence to no Man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your Wages*. In like Manner, our blessed Saviour, when he dismissed the Woman taken in Adultery, he let her depart with this Advice, *Go, and sin no more*. So did he instruct also the Man whom he had set free from the Infirmary, which was the Punishment of his Iniquity; *Behold thou*



## 134 DISCOURSE VI.

*art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse Thing come unto thee:* teaching neither the one nor the other any new Doctrine with respect to their particular Cases, but referring both back to that Law which they had transgressed, as the proper Measure of their future Obedience.

I shall now proceed to lay before you such Consequences as seem to me to be the natural Result of this Method made use of by our blessed Lord and his Apostles, in publishing the Gospel to Mankind.

And the first is this: That the Religion of the Gospel is the true original Religion of Reason and Nature. It is so *in Part*: it is all that, and more. Repentance was necessary, but it was not all. Repentance was the first Step towards Christian Perfection. See Heb. vi. 1.

This appears by considering the Nature of that Repentance which our Lord, and those who came after him in the Ministry of the Gospel, preached to the World: Repentance supposes a Transgression, and Transgression supposes a Law; for as the Apostle argues, *where there is no Law, there is no Transgression*. And since Repentance consists in a Change of Mind, in rectifying what

## DISCOURSE VI. 135

what was before amiss, and in fulfilling that Obedience which was before wanting; it is evident, that to repent of the Violation of any Law, is to return to the Obedience of it: and he that exhorts and calls you to Repentance, calls you back to the Obedience of that Law, against which you had offended. The Question then is, against what Law those Offences were committed, the Repentance for which was so necessary, that without it there was no Admittance into the Fellowship of the Gospel of Christ. The Laws of the Gospel, considered as such, are evidently excluded upon the present View; for Repentance being the first Thing every where taught, and antecedently to the Publication of any of the Rules and Precepts of the Gospel, the Law not yet published could not be the Rule of that Repentance, which related to Sins already committed. At the Time of the Publication of the Gospel, there were many Forms and Institutions of Religion subsisting in the World: but as these were very different from one another, insomuch that if some were true, others were certainly false; so they could not be the Ground of that Repentance, which being generally taught to

## 136 DISCOURSE VI.

all the World, to the *Gentile* as well as the *Jew*, must respect some general Law, which related alike to all, and the Obligations to which were in some Degree universally felt and acknowledged: and this can be no other than that which the Apostle to the *Romans* has described in Chap. ii. 14, 15. *When the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves: which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.* However the Light of Reason and Nature was darkened and obscured by the Ignorance and Superstition of the World, yet some Remains of it were in all Places to be found; and the general Principles of Religion were so rivetted in human Nature, that she could not but start at any Thing that directly contradicted them: thus, for Instance, in the great Branch of natural Religion, which relates to the Worship and Service of God, though Mankind had universally erred and defiled themselves with many Pollutions and Abominations, yet Atheism was as detested a Crime

## DISCOURSE VI. 137

Crime in the Heathen World, as it is in the Christian; and some, we know, were thought worthy of Death, for being the Maintainers of so unnatural an Opinion. A Sense of the moral Duties between Man and Man was better preserved; and there are not many Vices condemned in the Gospel, which were not infamous before in all the civilized Parts of the World. This general Law, as the Apostle tells us, was the Ground-work of Conscience, the Testimony of the Conscience plainly shewing the Work of the Law to be written in the Heart; and this is a further Evidence, that this Law of Nature was the Foundation of that Repentance, which was to usher in the Gospel: for as the preaching of Repentance necessarily refers himself to the Consciences of Men, to point out to them the Guilt of their Actions; so must his Doctrine necessarily relate to that Law, which is the Principle or Origin of Conscience. Since then the Doctrine of Repentance, with which the Gospel set out in the World, had Reference to the Law of Reason and Nature, against which Men had every where offended; and since Repentance infers the Necessity of a future Reformation, and a Return to that Duty



## 138 DISCOURSE VI.

Duty and Obedience from which by Transgression we are fallen; the Consequence is manifestly this, that the Gospel was a Republication of the Law of Nature, and its Precepts declarative of that original Religion, which was as old as the Creation.

That this must certainly be the Case, will appear, by considering the Nature of the Thing in itself. The Notions of Good and Evil are eternally and unalterably the same; which Notions are the Rules and Measures of all moral Actions, and are consequently necessary and constituent Parts of Religion: and therefore if the Religion of Nature, in her primitive State, was pure and uncorrupt (which will not, I presume, be denied), though there was sufficient Reason for a Republication of it, because of the great Ignorance and Superstition which had grown upon the World, yet there could be no Reason for any Alteration of it; for though the World was the worse for abusing the Religion of Nature, and might want to be reformed by a divine Instructor, yet the Religion of Nature was not the worse for being abused, but still retained its first Purity and Simplicity. The Duties of Religion, considered as a Rule of Action, flow from

## DISCOURSE VI. 139

from the Relation we bear to God, and to one another; and Religion must ever be the same, as long as these Relations continue unaltered. If our first Parent was the Creature of God, so are we; and whatever Service and Duty he owed, in Virtue of this Dependance, the same is due from us; nor can this Relation be ever made the Ground of different Duties in his Case, and in ours: if therefore Nature rightly instructed him at first how to serve his Maker, our Obligations being the same with his, our Rule must be the same also. The Case is the same with Respect to the Duties owing from Man to Man; and it would be as reasonable to suppose, that the three Angles of a Triangle should be equal to two right ones in one Age, and unequal in another, as to suppose that the Duties of Religion should differ in one Age from what they were in another, the Habitues and Relations from which they flow continuing always the same.

That the Case is in Fact what I have represented it to be, might be shewn from the particular Laws of the Gospel, and their Dependance, from the Maxims and Principles of natural Religion: but this would be rather

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rather the Work of a Volume than a Sermon; I will content myself therefore with one general Proof, which reaches to every Part of the Christian Doctrine, and yet will not lead me beyond the Bounds to which I am confined. Our Saviour in the 5th of St. *Matthew* tells us, *that he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them.* What his Meaning was, he sufficiently explained in the following Part of his Sermon on the Mount: in which, laying down first the old Law, he shewed in every Instance wherein the true Perfection of that Virtue consisted which the Law required. The Law forbade Murder and Adultery; our Lord declares, that not only the immoral Actions, known by those Names, were restrained, but even the internal Corruptions of Heart from which they flowed; and extends the Prohibition to Hatred and to Lust, one the Parent of Murder, the other of Adultery. Since then our Lord so fully declares that his Purpose was to perfect and complete the Law and the Prophets, it remains to be considered, what Notion he had of the Law and of the Prophets: in the 22d of St. *Matthew*, the Question was put to him by a Lawyer;

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## DISCOURSE VI. 141

*Which is the great Commandment in the Law?* Our Saviour answers, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, &c. This is the first and great Commandment;* and the second is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.* Having laid down these two great Rules, he thus declares his Sense with respect to the Subject of our present Enquiry; *On these Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* If the Law and the Prophets hang on these two Commandments, then the Doctrine of our Saviour, which is the Perfection of the Law and the Prophets, must hang on them likewise. Now if you will allow that the Love of God, and the Love of your Neighbour, are fundamental in the Law of Reason and Nature (as undoubtedly they are), you must also allow, that whatever may be deduced from them, by rational Consequence, must be a Precept of the Law of Nature: whatever therefore hangs on these two Commandments, must necessarily be a Part of Natural Religion; and that all the Law and the Prophets do so hang, and consequently the Doctrine of the Gospel, which is the Perfection of them, you have had our Saviour's express Testimony.



## 142 DISCOURSE VI.

mony. Since then it appears (as I think) that the Religion of the Gospel is the true original Religion of Reason and Nature ;

The second Thing I shall observe to you is, that it has, as such, a Claim to be received independent of those Miracles which were wrought for its Confirmation.

This Consequence will be admitted by all, who allow the Force and Obligation of natural Religion, and can be denied by none, who know or understand themselves. The Principles of Religion are interwoven in the very Frame and Make of our Minds ; and we may as well run from ourselves, as from the Sense of the Obligations we are under. If the Law which is in our Members should get the better of the Law of our Minds, and lead us into the forbidden Paths of Vice and Immorality ; though Obedience cannot hold us, yet Guilt will never forsake us ; and our own Consciences will not permit us to forget the Law, however our corrupt Passions may induce us to transgress it. This Sense will always keep a Passage open to the Heart, for Instruction to enter in ; and there needs nothing more to shew, that Man is obliged to submit to the Rules and Laws of Reason, than to shew that he is a  
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## DISCOURSE VI. 143

rational Creature ; since if Reason be of any Use, it is for our Direction ; and to suppose a Creature to have Reason to direct him, and yet that he ought not to be directed by it, is a Contradiction : so far therefore as the Gospel represents to us the Law of Nature, it needs only to appeal to the Reason of Mankind for its Authority, and may leave its Cause to be tried in every Man's own Breast before the Tribunal of Conscience : and how far this is the Case of the Gospel, has been already shewn at large.

But some one perhaps may have a Mind to ask, why he may not teach the Heathen the Religion of the Gospel, as well in his own Name, as in the Name of Christ ; since, being the very Religion of Reason, it wants no Name to support it ? To which I answer : that if the Heathen are such Masters of Reason, as to want no teaching, the Question is impertinent ; and if they do want instructing, there is no Comparison between the Masters.

But the Truth is, that all the Essentials of true Religion are contained in that Part of the Gospel, of which so much has been already spoken ; but how this Religion came to stand in need of being renewed by a special

## 144 DISCOURSE VI.

cial Commission from Heaven, how Nature came to want that new Light which the Gospel has given, and those additional Helps and Assistances from the Influence of the Spirit of God, which the Gospel has promised, is a Matter of another Consideration, and opens to us a new View, to see the Reasonableness and Necessity of the Doctrines peculiar to Christianity, which, though not different, are yet distinct from the Principles of Reason and Nature.

Had Man continued in the Purity of his first Religion, he had wanted no second; the Doctrine of Nature had led him to the Enjoyment of the glorious Hopes, to which he was born, of Life and Immortality. But when he fell under the Power and Dominion of Sin, he grew both blind and impotent, had but little Knowledge left to find his Duty, and still less his Ability to perform it. The History of the Fall is preserved to us in sacred Writ; but let the Scripture be silent, and let Experience only speak. Look back into the past Ages of the World, as far as the Clue of History can guide you, and tell me in what Place the Purity of natural Religion was preserved: observe the Manners of Men, and their religious Services,

## DISCOURSE VI. 145

vices, and when you are tired with the sad Prospect of the Ignorance and Barbarity of some, the Superstition and Idolatry of all, tell me once more, did the World want an Instructor or no? If it did, we have little Reason to complain that it had one, still less to stumble at the Dignity of the Person who undertook the desperate Cause of Nature; or to reject his Authority, because he is greater than we know how to conceive, even the only begotten Son of God.

He came into the World, not merely to restore the Religion of Nature, but to adapt it to the State and Condition of Man, and to supply the Defects, not of Religion, which continued in its first Purity and Perfection, but of Nature, which was fallen from the original Dignity of the Creation. Man was born the Heir of Glory and Immortality; but our Saviour found him under the Power of Sin and of Death. If Death came in as the Penalty of Disobedience to the Law of Nature, as we learn from the sure Word of Prophecy that it did, it was an Evil, for which natural Religion could afford no Remedy; for no Law provides a Remedy against its own Penalties; which would be to weaken and destroy the Obligations to

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## 146 DISCOURSE VI.

Obedience, which the Penalty was intended to enforce. And though the World every where retained some Notion or other of a future State, and was fond of cherishing the languishing Hopes of Immortality; yet these Hopes seem rather to be the Remains of that first State, in which Nature had the full Prospect of Life before her, and which subsisted when the Blessing itself was forfeited, than any just Assurance of another Life after Death, to be purchased by Virtue and Obedience. To repair this Breach, and to settle Religion once more, upon the sure Foundation of the Hopes and Fears of Eternity, our blessed Lord *brought Life and Immortality to light again* by the Gospel; and published to the World the new Doctrine of a Resurrection from the Grave, of the Truth of which Doctrine we had the first Instance, and the fullest Confirmation, in his own victorious Triumph over the Powers of Death and of Darkness. Hence it is that we are said to be begotten again through Christ Jesus unto a lively Hope, or unto the Hope of Life: hence also we are told, that *God hath now appointed a Day, in which he will judge the World by the Man Christ Jesus*. Hence it is, that these two, or rather this

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## DISCOURSE VI. 147

one Article relating to a Resurrection and a Judgment to come, was the main Thing which the Apostles had in Commission to publish to the World; insomuch that when a new Apostle was to be chosen in the Room of *Judas*, it was required, as a necessary Article, that he should be qualified to be a competent Witness of the Resurrection of Christ, in which the Authority of this great Article was founded.

But to what Purpose was it to restore Religion from the Corruptions of Ignorance and Superstition; to what End was this *better Hope* brought in? Since our first Parents, who wanted not this Hope, nor this Knowledge, yet wretchedly fell from both by Transgression, what Security can we, their Sons, still worse than they, promise ourselves from these Advantages? It is we that are weak and degenerate, it is we that most of all want to be restored: this original Corruption made it necessary, in order to save the World, not only to restore Religion, but Nature herself. Hence it is that our Admission into the Gospel is attended with a new Birth unto Righteousness; hence it is that we are put under the Conduct and Direction of the Holy Spirit, who is our

## 148 DISCOURSE VI.

Fellow-Labourer in the Gospel, and in all Times, and in all Places, ready to comfort and support the Faithful. If, to strengthen our Confidence in him, we are told that he is in all Respects equal to the extensive Charge; that being the Eternal Spirit of God, he can in all Places and at all Times discharge the Office; this Knowledge, which was communicated to make our Faith and Hope consistent, and to set both upon a reasonable Foundation, ought to be no Objection against either. And since these Articles of our Creed, being beyond the Discovery of human Reason, are placed upon the surer Foundation of the Demonstration of the Spirit, in mighty Signs and Wonders, they ought to be no Stumbling-block to us; for the Reason may teach us to embrace the Remedy, which she could not provide.

It is true, the Gospel has taught us Things, which by Nature we could not know; but they are all designed to confirm and strengthen our Hope in God: it is true also, that there are some Institutions in the Gospel, which in their own Nature are no constituent Parts of Religion; but they are such only as are necessary to enable us to do

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## DISCOURSE VI. 149

our Duty, by conveying to us new Supplies of spiritual Strength. These are the Additions which the Gospel has made to natural Religion; forgive its Injury. Our blessed Saviour saw that the Hopes of Nature were lost, therefore he brought to Light again Life and Immortality: he saw that we were corrupted, not able to resist Evil, and therefore he supplied the Defect by the Assistance of his holy Spirit; pardon his Care, and do not think the worse of him, or his Religion, for the great Provision he has made in it for your Security.

These Considerations may perhaps suggest to your Thoughts what probable Ground there is to hope for Success in our Endeavours to spread the Gospel of Christ in the dark Corners of the World; and what is the true Method of proposing it to the uninstructed Part of Mankind. But as I choose to decline this Subject, and to leave it to the properer Hands on which it is placed, I shall shut up all with this Petition: that God would hasten the Completion of the Prophecies relating to the Kingdom of Christ; that he would give him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the utmost Parts of the Earth for his Possession, that he may be his Salvation to all People.



## DISCOURSE VII.

PSALM CXXII. 6.

Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

**T**HERE is nothing places Religion in a more disadvantageous View, than the Opinion entertained by some, that Concern for the present Peace and Prosperity of the World is to foreign to all the Ends and Purposes of true Religion. That a good Man ought not to suffer his Thoughts much less his Passions and Affections to be engaged in to worldly a Subject.

The inspired Writers have indeed, with repeated Instructions, guarded us against the Temptations of Riches, Honours, and Pleasures, and prepared us to undergo the Calamities and Afflictions of Life, with

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## DISCOURSE VII.

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PSALM CXXii. 6.

*Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem: they shall  
prosper that love thee.*

**T**HERE is nothing places Religion in a more disadvantageous View, than the Opinion entertained by some, that a Concern for the present Peace and Prosperity of the World is so foreign to all the Ends and Purposes of true Religion, that a good Man ought not to suffer his Thoughts, much less his Passions and Affections, to be engaged in so worthless a Subject.

The inspired Writers have indeed, with repeated Instructions, guarded us against the Temptations of Riches, Honours, and Pleasures, and prepared us to undergo the Calamities and Afflictions of Life, with

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Firmness and Constancy of Mind. But what then? So does the General exhort his Soldiers to bear with Patience the Fatigues of War, to despise the Dangers of it, and in the Day of Action to press forward, regardless of Life itself; yet still Victory and Triumph, and the sweet Enjoyments of Peace, are the End of War; and the Soldier, though he must not fear to die, yet it is his Business to live and conquer. Religion is a spiritual Warfare, and the World is the Scene of Action, in which every good Man will be sure to meet with Enemies enough; and it is not the End he aims at, but the Opposition he meets with, in pursuing that End, that makes it necessary for him to be inured to bear the Miseries and Afflictions of the World. Were the Case otherwise, it would be Iniquity to pray for temporal Peace and Prosperity; since we never ought to seek that by Prayer to God, which the Rules of our Religion will not permit us to be concerned for. So that the Exhortation in the Text, to *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*, implies that we ought to be concerned for her Peace, so concerned as to do whatever is in our Power to procure, and to preserve it; since Prayer to  
God

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God for his Assistance, supposes the Use of our own Endeavours to obtain the Blessing we contend for: and that we may not think, that the Christian Religion has made any Alteration in this Case, St. Paul has exhorted us to pray, and to give Thanks for all Men; especially for Kings, and all that are in Authority; for this Reason, *That we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty.*

Upon this View then a Concern for the Peace and Prosperity of our Country is not only a political but a religious Virtue; a Care that becomes us, both as we are Men, and as we are Christians; which stands not upon the narrow Bottom of Self-Interest, but rises from a more generous Principle, partaking of the Love of God, and of our Neighbour; since whilst we seek the public Peace, we shew our Beneficence to one, and our Obedience to the other.

But there is a farther Consideration, which makes the public Peace to be the just Concern of every good Man. The present State of Religion in the World is such, and so connected every where with the civil Rights of Mankind, that there is no probable Ground to hope, that even the Religion we profess



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profess can be saved out of the Ruins of the Liberty of our Country. If therefore it be a Care worthy of a good Man, to preserve the Purity of Religion in his own Time, or to transmit it safe to Posterity; if we may wish, as well as pray, that he may *lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty*; or that his Sons and his Daughters may stand up after him before the Lord in the Congregation of his Saints: if these be lawfull Desires, and such as we may by our best Endeavours labour to obtain, our Religion will never permit us to be unconcerned Spectators in any Cause that affects the Prosperity of our Country; upon which, under God, depends the Liberty we enjoy of freely professing the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

The *Psalms* from which the Text is taken, turns wholly upon these two Topics; the temporal Prosperity of *Jerusalem*, considered as the Head of the civil Government, in the flourishing Condition of which the Happiness of the whole Nation was concerned; and considered as the Seat of true Religion, the City in which God had chose to dwell, and to place his Name there; upon whose Peace consequently depended the Security of the

## DISCOURSE VII. 155

the holy Religion, which was there taught and professed. The first Thing that gave Vent to the holy *Psalmist's* Joy, was observing the Unanimity of the People in their Attendance upon the Service of God in the holy City; *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the House of the Lord: our Feet shall stand within thy Gates, O Jerusalem.* From hence, he entertains himself with the beautiful Prospect of *Jerusalem*, as it was the Center both of religious and civil Government, in which were seated the Ark of God, and the Throne of *David*: from whence issued the Streams of Justice and Holiness, to refresh and make glad all the Cities of *Israel*. *Jerusalem is built as a City, that is compact together;* or, as the old Translation reads, *that is at Unity in itself. Whither the Tribes go up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Testimony of Israel, to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord. There are set Thrones of Judgment, the Thrones of the House of David.* The Contemplation of this happy State of his Country, naturally vented itself in the Warmth and Ardor expressed in the Text, and following Verse; *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem?*

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*lem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy Walls, and Prosperity within thy Palaces.* This affectionate Prayer and Exhortation was founded in a Concern for the temporal Happiness of his Country and Nation; and therefore he adds, *For my Brethren and Companions Sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee;* and in a just Regard for the Honour of God and his Religion, therefore, he closes all with this Reflection: *Because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy Good.*

You see the Extent of the Duty recommended in the Text, and the Reasons in which it is founded: and since we have so great an Authority to justify our Care and Concern for the public Peace and Happiness of our Country, both in Regard to our civil Rights, and to the Interest of that holy Religion which we profess, I beg Leave to bring the Arguments home to ourselves, and to the Occasion of this Day, by observing to you,

I. What Reason we have on both these Accounts to bless God for our Deliverance from the late Rebellion: and,

II. What Obligations we are under from  
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## DISCOURSE VII. 157

the same Motives, to use our own best Endeavours, to make perpetual the Blessing of this Deliverance.

Some Arguments there are, which require rather a Capacity of Feeling, than any great Acuteness of Judgment, to apprehend them: such are they which are drawn from the Experience of Sense, from Pleasure or Pain, from the Conveniences or Inconveniences of Life; of which no Man is a capable Judge, who wants the Sense proper to distinguish between the Pleasure and the Pain, or the Experience of the Convenience or Inconvenience under Debate. One would think, that an ordinary Imagination would serve to represent the Difference of Liberty and Slavery; of the State, in which every Man may sit under his own Vine, and eat his Bread with Cheerfulness; and that Condition, in which nothing is to be called our own, but the Misery of submitting to despotic Power: and yet we find, that the Generality of Men are not Masters of so much Reflection as is necessary to arrive at this small Degree of Knowledge in the Affairs of the World. It is the Observation of *Tacitus*, the *Roman* Historian, one allowed to be a good Judge of Mankind, that the  
People



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People of *Rome* were prepared for Slavery by the long Reign of *Augustus*, which had almost worn out the Race of Men that had tasted the Sweets of Liberty and Freedom. Ours seems to be the Reverse of their Case: we have so long enjoyed the Protection of our Laws, and are got at such a Distance from the late Times of Distress, that we have not Memory enough of them left to awaken our Care to prevent their Return. Our Fathers, who lived under the Dread of Popery and arbitrary Power, are most of them gone off the Stage, and have carried away with them the Experience, which we their Sons stand in Need of, to make us in earnest to preserve the Blessing of Liberty and pure Religion, which they have bequeathed us. O that I had Words to represent to the present Generation, the Miseries which their Fathers underwent; that I could describe their Fears and Anxieties, their restless Nights and their uneasy Days, when every Morning threatened to usher in the last Day of *England's* Liberty, when Men stood mute for Want of Counsel, and every Eye was watching with Impatience for the happy Gale that should save the Kingdom; whose Fortunes were reduced so

low

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low as to depend upon the Chance of Wind and Weather.

Had Men such a Sense of the Miseries of the Time past, it would teach them what Consequences they were to expect from any successful Attempt against the present Establishment. They would not want to be instructed, what a free Nation had to fear under the Government of one, educated in Sight of all the Arts of Tyranny and Oppression; or what Usage a Protestant Church would find, under the Influence of a Prince trained up from his Cradle in the Superstition and Corruption of the Church of *Rome*. Were the Influence of Religion confined within the narrow Compass of every Man's own Breast, the Subject, perhaps, would have but little Reason to be inquisitive about the Prince's Persuasion; but since it is Part of every Man's Religion to propagate the Doctrine he professes; and since the Methods of Propagation in the Hands of a Prince, which are strengthened by the Power of the temporal Sword, are not likely to be confined to the gentle Measures of Reason and Instruction; the Religion of the Prince must be considered as a Condition requisite to the Happiness and Prosperity of the People.

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ple. In our own Case this Consideration is the more necessary, because it is the avowed Principle of the Church of *Rome*, not only to wish for the Conversion of those who dissent from her, but to force it by all the Terrors of worldly Power. And a Nation must want common Sense, to put the Sword of Government into his Hands, who they know will be bound in Conscience to use it, either to the Destruction of their Souls or their Bodies. There is no one doubts, but that there are natural Incapacities sufficient to exclude one, otherwise entitled to Government. An outrageous Madman nobody would trust, because nothing is to be expected from him but Havock and Destruction. Now if a moral Defect will produce the same evil Consequences, why should not the moral Incapacity be esteemed as strong a Bar as the natural? It matters not whether it is Conscience or Madness which causes the Destruction, a Nation surely has a Right to prevent such a Violence, without being troubled to know, whether the Distemper, from which it grows, has its Root in the Head, or in the Heart. The *Romanists* have little Reason to complain of this Instance of our Care for our own Security,

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rity, since it is the Doctrine of their Church, taught by Councils, confirmed by Popes, and defended by their ablest Schoolmen and Divines, that Heretics have no Right to Dominion; that they may be deposed by the Pope, and their Subjects absolved from all Bonds of Allegiance to them. And their Practice has been of a Piece with their Doctrine: *Henry* the Third of *France* was excommunicated for a less Crime, for favouring only the Succession of a Protestant Prince; and thus excommunicated, was murdered by a poor Monk. *Henry* the Fourth was so strongly opposed by the League, animated by the Pope, that he could never fix himself in the Throne till he changed his Religion. If we come to our own Country, Queen *Elizabeth* was formally deposed by a Bull from *Rome*; and her Subjects absolved from their Obedience to her: nay, thrice was she deposed by three Popes, to shew how constant they were to this Point. When King *James* the First came to the Crown, his first Compliment from *Rome*, was by a Mandate of *Clement* the Eighth, declaring him incapable of holding the Crown, because he was an Heretick; that is, because he was a Protestant;

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and therefore enjoining his Subjects to yield him no Duty or Obedience. But notwithstanding this Doctrine, so well confirmed by Authority and Practice, yet considering the present State of *Britain*, and the Views of *Rome*, I should not be surpris'd to hear her Emissaries maintaining, with all Solemnity, the contrary Opinion. When a Protestant Prince was to be depos'd by *Roman Catholics*, it was proper Encouragement to tell them, that Herefy was a Forfeiture of Dominion; but now, that they want the Assistance of the Protestants of *England* to advance a Popish Prince to the Throne, we may certainly expect to hear from them, that Religion is out of the Question when the Claims and Titles of Princes are under Debate; and perhaps too we may be ready enough to believe them; so much *wiser are the Children of this World in their Generation, than the Children of Light.*

The Principles upon which the Legality of the present Establishment are maintained, are I think but improperly made a Part of the present Quarrel which divides the Nation. There are but few who have not precluded themselves on this Point: those I mean who have had Courage and Plainness enough

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enough to own their Sense, and to forego the Advantages, either of Birth or Education, rather than give a false Security to the Government, which under their present Persuasion they could not make good. To these I have nothing more to say, than to wish them what I think they well deserve, a better Cause: but to us, who had bound ourselves by previous Oaths and Obligations in the most solemn Manner in the World, the Accession of his Majesty could administer no Occasion of reconsidering this Question: there was nothing new required of us; we had no Faith to give, which was not already plighted, and bound upon our Souls by the most sacred Engagements. Those therefore under these Circumstances, who have openly engaged, or secretly favoured the Rebellion, are void of all Excuse; they are guilty of the greatest Crime under the greatest Aggravation; and seem to have no Refuge left, but that which was *Adam's Policy*, who hid himself from the Presence of the Lord God amongst the Trees of the Garden, because he had nothing to cover his Nakedness.

Should any such, quitting all Pretences of Dissatisfaction with the Lawfulness of the

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present Government, plead Disobligations or Resentments of any Sort, as the Ground of their Proceedings, to them we answer in the Words of our blessed Saviour, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of*. Where did they learn, that Rebellion is the proper Remedy in such Cases? The Church of *England* has no such Doctrine; and if they cannot govern their own Passions, yet, in Justice to her, they ought not to use her Name in a Cause which she ever has, and will disclaim.

It is perhaps too high a Degree of Virtue to expect in this Age, that Men should act with a steady View to the public Good, without being drawn at all by the Bias of their own Interest. Whoever builds upon a Dependence on such a Behaviour from any Set of Men, will, I believe, find himself mistaken. Allow then what cannot be avoided, that Men will differ in their Views and private Interests, yet still methinks there is one common Concern, which is the Preservation of the whole, in the Security of which every Man's private Fortune is founded; and it is as absurd for a Man under any Resentment whatever to enter into Measures destructive of his Country's Peace, as it would

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would be for him to burn the Title to his Estate, because the Tenant was behind in his Rent.

If therefore we have any Concern for the Peace and Happiness of our Country, or any Zeal to preserve the Light of the Gospel with which these Kingdoms have been blessed; or if our Consciences are not hardened against the Influence of the most solemn Oaths and Obligations, under which we have bound ourselves to be true and faithful to our present Sovereign; we must detest this Rebellion, and with sincere Hearts adore the Goodness of God, who hath wrought this Deliverance for us. Let us then, in the second Place, consider,

II. What Obligations we are under from the same Motives, to use our own best Endeavours to make perpetual the Blessing of this Deliverance.

This Obligation is but the necessary Consequence of the Duty which we are met this Day to perform. Thanksgiving is little more than a solemn Piece of Mockery, if we have no Value for the Deliverance for which we would seem to be thankful. If any, or if all the Reasons already mentioned, ought to excite us to pray for the Peace of our Coun-



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try, or to bless God for restoring it, they must also move us to do what is in our own Power to preserve it; since in vain do we pray for the Assistance of God in any Case, whilst we neglect to use the Means of helping ourselves, which he has put in our Power.

How much the Preservation of the present Establishment depends on the Success of public Councils, every Body knows; and yet should I, by any particular Application, seem to suppose that your Zeal in this Cause wanted a Spur, I might well be thought to *be the only Stranger in Israel, and not to have known the Things which have come to pass in these Days.*

What private Men can do, they best know: many are certainly well qualified by their Reputation, their Station, and great Abilities, to promote the Interest of their King and Country; and surely it is every Man's Duty to do what he thinks he lawfully may do, to serve these desirable Ends. And this would be allowed to be a very reasonable Demand, were not the Nation unhappily divided into Factions, which have swallowed up all public Duty, and transferred to themselves that Allegiance which is due

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due only to the Crown. Were there but half the Zeal to serve the Public, which Men daily express for the Interest of their several Parties, there would be but little Encouragement for a second Attempt to disturb our Peace.

It is wonderful to observe, in all Cases, this steady Adherence to Party: those who ascribe it to mere Corruption, and the sordid Ends of private Gain, see but little into the true Cause; there is another Principle more remote from common Observation, which has a greater Influence; a Principle in itself more generous, though oftentimes in its Consequences not less pernicious; I mean, the Regard which Men have for their own Credit and Reputation. This is the natural Fruit of the best Soil; every good Man has it, and it is the Life of virtuous Actions, when its Views are rightly directed. But where Kingdoms are divided into opposite Factions, the true Standard of Reputation will always be lost, and Men will grow into Esteem, not for their virtuous Actions, but for their Party Merit. Hence it comes to pass, that in civil Disputes, it is as reproachful to deviate from your Leader's Opinion, as it is for a private Soldier to desert his

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General in the Day of Battle. The Obligations of the public Duty, or of private Opinion, will obtain no Quarter for you ; for such is your Case, that you may with less Hazard of Reproach commit almost any Vice, than venture to be in the right without the Support of a Majority. This Evil is the more to be lamented, because its Infection spreads most easily among the best. *Helvidius Priscus* lived in the Degeneracy of the Empire, but had all the Virtues of an old Roman ; yet he was observed to be *appetentior famæ, quando etiam sapientibus*, as the Historian remarks, *cupido gloriæ novissima exiit*. But whatever may be said in Excuse for this Passion, in Matters which a willing Casuist may persuade himself to be indifferent ; yet surely it is to be highly blamed, when the Prosperity of our King, our Country, and our Religion are at Stake : in such a Time every Man should run the Hazard of being true to the Public, especially if he cannot desert it without being false to himself.

There is another Evil, not much unlike the former, though of a different Kind, which is owing also to our unhappy Divisions. If, on one Side, it may be sometimes difficult

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difficult for Men who have no ill Intention to the Public, to discharge their Duty to it; on the other, there will always be some to rejoice when they do Wrong; though Zeal for the Government never produces a more preposterous Effect, than when it makes Men take Pleasure in the Number, or in the Perverseness of its Enemies. Those who are sincerely and with any Judgment in the Interest of the King, have nothing more to wish, than to see the Hearts of all his Majesty's Subjects united in Obedience and Affection to him; or, if that is not to be obtained, to see as many as can be. But there is a little Kind of Men, who mistaking their party Zeal for Affection to the Government, seem transported when those, whom they have been taught to think their Enemies, do by any Misbehaviour render themselves obnoxious to the present Powers: as they rejoice in such Misbehaviour, so are they apt sometimes to provoke it, and think themselves never better entitled to plead their own Merit, than when they have urged others to such Things, as a wise Man and a Friend to the Government would with all his Care have laboured to prevent.

Under these unhappy Circumstances there

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is more Reason to wish, than there is Ground to hope, for Peace and Unanimity at Home. It is an easy Matter for a few designing Men to fill the People with great, and, at the same Time, very unjust Apprehensions from their Governors; though his Majesty, in his great Wisdom and Goodness, took at the very Beginning the properest Step to prevent this Mischief, by declaring that he would always make the Constitution in Church and State the Rule of his Administration. As our Constitution in Church has many Friends, so to our great Misfortune has it some Enemies; and as it cannot be dissembled, but that the Fears and Jealousies on one Side, so it will hardly be denied, but that the Hopes and Expectations on the other, have been very unreasonable. And considering how People, in a State of Suspicion, watch and observe each other, how naturally the Fears of one increase by seeing the Hopes of the other, without knowing or enquiring what Ground or Foundation there is for them; it will be necessary, in order to quiet the angry Spirit that is among us, to suppress *these Hopes*, as well as to allay *those Fears*: and I pray God to reduce them both to their proper Bounds, that we may

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may all be content to obey on the same Terms, on which his Majesty has assured us he is disposed to govern.

But above all, let us take Care to justify ourselves in our Concern for our holy Religion, which is our best Plea, and surest Pledge of divine Favour, by adorning in our Lives and Conversations the Doctrine which we profess. We have with commendable Zeal, on many Occasions, stood in Defence of our Religion, at the Expence of the Blood and Treasure of the Nation: let it not be observed by our Enemies, that the Religion of *England* is a mere Watch-word for an Army, never valued but when it is to be fought for; and in Times of Peace laid by, condemned to rust, with other the useless Arms and Instruments of War. Our Religion has domestic, as well as foreign Enemies; we have seen with what an uncommon Zeal it has been attacked by Infidels; professing not to introduce any religious Persuasion, but to throw out all. These Men, who deride all Religion, will be found in the End to be the best Agents for them who labour to bring in the worst: and the Interest of our Country being so united to the Cause of Religion, such profane Liberty

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is destructive of our Security, since every Heart, that is alienated from a Sense of God and Religion, carries off with it a Pair of Hands from the Defence of the Public.

To a Zeal for true Religion let us add Charity, the Crown of all Virtues; and let us sanctify this Day of our Deliverance, by laying aside all Hatred, Malice, and Desire of Revenge; that we may with one Heart, and one Mind, glorify God for his Mercies, and implore his Protection for ourselves, our King, and our Country; that he would give us the Blessings of Truth and Peace; that he would long preserve our Sovereign; and that there may never want a Protestant Prince descended from him, to go in and out before his People.

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## DISCOURSE VIII.

Acts xx. 35.

*I have shewed you all Things, how that so  
labouring ye ought to support the Weak;  
and to remember the Words of the Lord  
Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give  
than to receive.*

THESE Words concluded the moving  
Speech which St. Paul made to the  
Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, when he  
took his final Leave of them. The Time he  
had to discourse with them was but little,  
and the Occasion was very solemn; which  
Circumstances would determine him to  
mention nothing to them, but what he  
judged to be of the last Consequence and  
Concern; and what they ought always to  
remember, as the dying Words of their great  
Teacher



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Teacher and Apostle. At the 25th Verse, you find him under the Passion of a Father bidding adieu to his Children and the World; *And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my Face no more.* But to shew that this Care of them would outlive himself, he gives them his last Advice, the best, the only Legacy he had to bestow. Two Things he especially recommends to them, the Care of the Church of God, and the providing for the Necessities of the Poor and Helpless. The former Charge you have at the 28th Verse; *Take Heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.* The latter you read in the Words of the Text: *I have shewed you all Things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the Weak; and to remember the Words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

There are some Duties so essential to Religion, so necessary to form the Character of a good Man, much more of a good Christian, that they always have been, and I hope will

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will always continue to be the Preacher's common Topic. Yet this, I know, is in some Respects a Disadvantage, and that Exhortations of this Kind are esteemed to be so much Things of Course, that they are often used with more Effect by others, from whom they are less expected. I have need therefore to bespeak your Favour, that I may be heard on this Subject, without incurring the Censure of being thought a common Beggar. And yet not to dissemble my Intention, beg I would; partly indeed for your Sakes, whose Necessities can no otherwise be relieved but by Charity; but much more for your Sakes, whose ample Fortunes, if rightly administered, entitle you to the choicest Blessings of the Gospel: *For it is more blessed to give than to receive.*

In speaking of the Duty and Obligations of Charity, in this restrained Sense of the Word; in which it regards only the temporal Wants and Necessities of our Brethren; there are three Things proper to be considered.

*First,* How far the Obligations of this Duty extend; for that they do not extend equally to all, is evident, because such as are qualified to receive, are in all ordinary Cases exempted from giving.

*Secondly,*

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*Secondly*, Who are duly qualified to receive Charity.

*Thirdly*, What is the Blessing and Reward that attends upon the faithful Discharge of this Duty.

The first Thing to be considered is, how far this Duty extends; I have shewed you all Things, says the Apostle, *How that so labouring* ye ought to support the Weak. In the Verses preceding the Text, he had set before them his own Example, and the Method he took to provide for himself, and those who were with him. *I have coveted*, says he, *no Man's Silver or Gold or Apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these Hands have ministered unto my Necessities, and to them that were with me.* Now the Exhortation of the Text being founded on the Example which the Apostle himself had given, and those Words, *That so labouring ye ought to support the Weak*, necessarily referring to such Labour as St. Paul had undergone, when his own Hands ministered to his own Necessities; it is evident, that the Apostle directed, that Part of what they could earn, even by the Labour of their Hands, should be set aside and dedicated to Works of Charity. The same Direction is repeated

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repeated in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, Chap. iv. 28. *Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his Hands the Thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* Where you find Labour enjoined them, not only that they may have an honest Means of supporting themselves, but that they might have something likewise to spare in Charity to such as were in Distress, and unable to work for their own Living. As the Apostle pleads his own Example to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*; so does he likewise to the *Thessalonians*, in his 2d Epistle wrote to them; *Neither did we, says he, eat any Man's Bread for nought; but wrought with Labour and Travail Night and Day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you. Not because we have not Power, (i. e. a Right to claim a Maintenance as Ministers of the Gospel) but to make ourselves an Ensamble for you to follow us.* Chap. iii. verse 9.

From these Passages laid together, it is manifest, that the Apostle calls upon all indifferently, the Elders and Pastors of the Church, as well as others, to labour, working with their Hands; and he chargers on

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their Labour, not only the Duty of providing for themselves and Families, but also the Care of supporting those among them who were indigent and necessitous : but the Measures and Proportions of Charity not being Things of a determinate Nature, but such as are relative to the Circumstances and Conditions of Times and Persons, and vary and change together with them ; it must be absurd to apply the Rules relating to Charity, which are to be found in the Holy Scriptures, to ourselves and our own Times, without making a due Allowance for the Difference in our Circumstances and theirs to whom the Rules were first directed. And therefore to give you a just sense of the Meaning of the Text, and of other apostolical Rules concerning the Practice of Charity, it will be necessary to shew you what was the State of the Times and Persons to which those Rules have Reference.

The Church of Christ at the first preaching of the Gospel consisted almost wholly of the Poor and Indigent, such as were hardly able to support and maintain themselves by their Labour, much less to be liberal towards the Support of others : for this Reason St. *Paul* chose rather to work for

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## DISCOURSE VIII. 179

for his Bread with his own Hands, than to make his Ministry burthensome to the Churches; though at the same Time he asserts the Right he had to be supported by them in his Function, notwithstanding the Narrowness of their own Circumstances. The Learning and Education of the first Converts were no better than their Fortunes; and even the Rulers of the Church were oftentimes taken from Trades and mean Employments; the Spirit of God wonderfully supplying their Defects, and enabling them under all outward Disadvantages to promote the Cause of the Gospel with great Courage and Success. Upon this Account the Gospel is spoken of, as the peculiar Portion and Inheritance of the Poor; our Saviour gives it as a Characteristick of himself and his Mission, that *the Poor had the Gospel preached to them*, Matth. xi. 25. And St. Paul addressing to the *Corinthians*, discovers to us the Condition of that Church; *Ye see your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish Things of the World, to confound the Wise; and God hath chosen the weak Things of the World, to confound the*

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*Things which are mighty; and base Things of the World, and Things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and Things which are not, to bring to nought the Things that are.*  
1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28.

These Circumstances of the first Christians considered, it is easy to justify the Propriety of the Apostle's Exhortation in the Text. When you reflect how Poverty reigned through the whole Body, you will not think it strange that the Apostle speaks of Labour, even to the Elders of the Church; since their own Labour and Work were the only Riches the Christians of those Days were in Possession of; and it must be either Perverseness or Ignorance that makes some argue from this, and other like Passages of Scripture, against a settled Maintenance for the Christian Clergy; without seeing, that the Consequence, if there be any Thing in it, must equally affect the whole Body of Christians: for the Reason why the Governors of the Church were poor, was, because the whole Church was so; and if the Example must be pressed to oblige the present Times, all Men must part either with their Estates, or their Religion; otherwise we cannot be in the Condition of the primitive

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mitive Church. It would at this Time of Day be no very proper Exhortation to call upon all Christians without Distinction, to work with their Hands, that they might have something to spare in Charity; but it was not only proper, but necessary in the Beginning, when there was no other Source of Riches in the Church, but the Work and Labour of Christians. In the Text, you see the Elders, and with them all others, were called upon to labour, that they might be able to support the Weak: and in the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, the Precept is general, *To labour, working with the Hands*, that there may be something to spare to him that needeth. Can you imagine, that nothing is fit to be dedicated to Charity, but what is earned by bodily Labour? or that those who have plentiful Fortunes and Estates are obliged to work with their Hands, that they may by their Labour supply the Wants of others, which they can better and more effectually supply out of their large Revenues? It may be, and certainly is, very proper for us to exhort you to part with something out of your Abundance, to ease the Wants of the Poor, to spare something out of the Superfluities of



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Fortune, to support the Neceffitous : but it had been very improper for the Apostles fo to have exhorted Christians, at a Time when there were none who had either Abundance or Superfluity ; all they could do was to admonish and, persuade those who were able to labour more abundantly, that they might be in a Condition to contribute to the Relief of such as were unfit for work by Age, Sicknefs, or other Infirmary. Those who are able to work, who are blessed with Health and Strength, and Soundnefs of Limbs, are rich with respect to those who are incapable through Want of Limbs, or by the Weight of Years, to assist themselves ; and therefore, when bodily Labour was the whole Riches of the Church, there was a Neceffity that the Strong should work to support the Weak ; or that the Weak should perish in their Want and Poverty. And this shews the Reason of such Precepts of Charity, in which Men are moved to part with something, even out of the little they can earn by the Sweat of their Brows.

This will help us likewise to understand some other Passages of Scripture relating to the Exercise of Charity. St. *Paul* gives the *Corinthians* timely Notice of his Intention,

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## DISCOURSE VIII. 183

to make a Collection among them for charitable Uses ; and exhorts them to lay by a little every Week, as they could spare it, that he might find them prepared to contribute when he should come. Now this plainly regards their Poverty and low Circumstances ; for had they been rich, there had been no need for it ; but they were not so wealthy as to pay Bills at Sight ; and, therefore, their only way was to prepare their Sum by little and little, as their Circumstances would give them leave to spare it.

In the Second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, the Apostle is upon the same Argument, and presses them to be liberal with great Earnestness ; but that he might not seem to bear too hard upon their Necessities, he thus corrects himself ; *I mean not that other Men be eased, and you burthened ; but by an Equality, that now at this Time your Abundance may be a Supply for their Want*, 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14. What does this Equality mean, which he would introduce between the Givers and Receivers of Charity ? Must we strip ourselves so far as to be upon a Level with the Poor, who ask our Alms ? This is a hard Saying, and, if pursued strictly, would introduce great Confusion and Disorder into

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the World. But if you consider the Condition of the Church when the Apostle wrote, you will see how properly he addresses them. They might well have said to him, Why must all the Burthen lie on us? What have we, that we do not purchase by irksome Toil and Labour? To prevent which Complaint, the Apostle is before-hand with them in declaring, that he meant not that they should be burthened, and others set at ease: had he been applying to the Rich and Wealthy, there could have been no Occasion for this Caution, for they can give with a liberal Hand, and yet not be burthened. So likewise the Equality he speaks of has the same View; he presses it not as in itself just or necessary; but in respect to the Time, it could not be avoided; for when there are none but Poor to relieve the Poor, it is plain how near the Equality must be between the Giver and the Receiver. This Equality, therefore, the Apostle does not lay down as a general Rule and Proportion, to be observed in Charity; but rather excuses it, as the necessary Circumstance of the Charity of those Times.

From what has been said, we may learn to give an Answer to the first Enquiry, namely,

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## DISCOURSE VIII. 185

namely, how far the Duty of Charity extends? The Apostle brings all under the Obligations of it, who are able to labour; but this must be mitigated by the Difference of Circumstances between us and those to whom the Apostle spoke. He pressed all to labour, in order to their being charitable; the Reason is plain, he had none to speak to but such as lived by their Labour: but were he in this Place, at this Day, his Exhortation, I doubt not, would be directed especially to the Rich and Wealthy, to such of you as enjoy the Blessings of Heaven in an uncommon Degree. Those who live by their Labour, are rich and prosperous in Comparison of the poor Wretches who move miserably on Crutches, or who want Hands to help themselves; and they owe a Tribute to God for the Strength they enjoy of his Gift. This is plain from the Apostle's Rule; and if it is, if even the meaner Sort are indebted to their great Master, and must pay an Acknowledgment out of the little they receive; how much greater are your Obligations, who neither toil nor spin, and yet are clothed in Glory, who neither reap nor gather into Barns, and yet are fed in Plenty? This is plain. But it is harder to say



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say with Respect to the lower Part of Mankind, where the Obligation to this Duty begins; for although some who labour may be Debtors to Charity, yet all are not, because all are not able to answer the Necessities of themselves and their Families by the Profit of their Work; and such can be under no Call to contribute to others. If I may have leave to deliver an Opinion in a Matter no where clearly determined, I would found it on the Advice which *St. Paul* gives to the *Corinthians*, that they should lay by in Store the first Day of every Week, as God had prospered them; that is, that some Part of what remained after a Provision for the present Occasions of themselves and Families, should be reserved to Charity. In this View, all who are in a saving Way, or who may be so with prudent Care, are under the Obligations of Charity; for it is but reasonable, that we should do good in Proportion as we grow rich. Between our own present Wants, and the present Wants of others, Nature will admit of no Comparison; but when we are able to lay up for ourselves, it is hardly consistent with the Love we owe our Brother, to be so partial to ourselves, as to suffer the Care for  
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## DISCOURSE VIII. 187

our own future Wants, to shut out the Consideration of his present Misery. But this Matter is left to every Man's Discretion, in order to prove his Love, since too strict Rules would in great Measure destroy the Virtue of Charity, the true Value of which lies chiefly in this, that it is a Free-will Offering.

Let us then proceed to the second Enquiry, namely, who are duly qualified to receive Charity.

*I have shewed you all Things, how that so labouring, ye ought to support the Weak.* By the *Weak* here we must understand, such as are not able to labour and work for their own Living; for since all who can labour are placed on one Side, and made Debtors to Charity, the *Weak*, who are placed on the other Side, and who have a Right to be supported by Charity, must be such as are not able to work, or to provide for themselves in any honest Calling or Employment. This Case is fully determined by the Apostle in his second Epistle to the *Thessalonians*; *When we were with you, says he, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat; for we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly,*  
*working*

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*working not at all, but are Busy-bodies: Now them that are such we command, and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with Quietness they work, and eat their own Bread,* Chap. iii. 10, 11, 12. Here you see all such as could work, excluded from the Benefit of Charity, and laid under a Necessity to labour by this Injunction; *If they will not work, neither let them eat;* that is, let them not be supported in their Idleness, but be compelled by Hunger to do their Duty, that they may, as the Apostle speaks, *eat their own Bread,* and not become a Burthen upon the Charity of the Church.

The general Rule then arising from these apostolical Precepts, seems to be this: That such only are due Objects of Charity, who are through Sickness or other Infirmary rendered incapable of Labour. And yet this Rule, if construed to a rigorous Sense, will be found inconsistent with Reason and Equity; for it may happen, that the Man who is most able to labour, and who does labour to the utmost of his Strength and Power, may be the most pitiable and unexceptionable Object of Charity: the Reason is, because a Man is not in all Cases able to earn so much as the Necessities of himself  
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## DISCOURSE VIII. 189

and Family require; and then he must either perish, or be relieved; and his working for his Maintenance as much as he can, is so far from excluding him, that there cannot be a better Plea in his Behalf. Where poor Families are numerous, and consist mostly of young Children, who can bring in nothing to the common Stock, by any Thing they are capable of doing, this Case often happens; and the Wants of the Family exceed all that the Diligence and Industry of the Parents can provide.

But though we cannot state the Rule of Charity so as to exclude all who can labour; yet it may seem reasonable perhaps so to limit it, as that all who can work should work before they are entitled to any Assistance from others. There is much more Equity in this than the other; yet even to require this, in all Cases, would be cruel and inhuman: we know the Casualties that all human Things are subject to; we have seen many reduced to Poverty and Want, from the most flourishing and prosperous Condition: Fire and Water, Winds and Storms, which are the secret Ministers of Providence, cause mighty Changes in the World,  
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and often place the Richest upon the same Level with the Poorest; and whenever it pleases God to set such Instances before us, the tenderest Regard is due to their Misfortunes. When you see a Man fallen under such Calamities, one perhaps too who has been a Father to the Needy and Friendless, who has relieved Hundreds in the Days of his Prosperity, would you, when the Hand of God was upon him, turn aside from his Affliction, and say, Go, work for your Living? Though indeed, in a reasonable Way of judging, they who have not been inured to labour from their Youth, but have had a liberal ingenuous Education, may be fairly reckoned in the Number of those who are not able to work. The Plea of the unjust Steward in the Gospel, when it was put into the Mouth of such an honest unfortunate Man, has every Thing in it to move your Pity and Compassion: *I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.*

Since then there can be hardly any general Rule fixed, which will be equally applicable to all Cases, it may be worth our while to examine the Reason and Equity from which this Duty flows, which will

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## DISCOURSE VIII. 191

serve to direct us in all the various Circumstances under which the Objects of Charity present themselves.

Charity is a relative Duty, and supposes the Distinction of Rich and Poor, since, if there were no such Distinction, there could be no Reason assigned, why any Man should part with what he has to another, who is already in as easy a Fortune and Condition as himself. The Distinction of Rich and Poor supposes Property; for if all Things were in common, and every Man had a Right to serve himself at Discretion out of the Heap, one could not be richer than another, but every Man would have an equal Title to every Thing: but then how unequally soever the good Things of the World are divided, the Wants and Necessities of Nature are shared in common: the Poor are as sensible of Hunger, and Thirst, and Cold, as the Rich are; and it cannot be supposed that God sent Men into the World with such Wants and Cravings, merely to starve and perish under them; and yet how shall their Wants be supplied, who have nothing to supply them with? Steal they must not; for that would be to invade the sacred Law of Property, and overturn the Order

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Order which God has settled and appointed : it remains therefore, that they must obtain the Things they want from the Proprietors of the World, in exchange for such Services as they are able to perform.

But is this, you will say, a sufficient Source for the Maintenance of the Poor? What if those who are in Possession should refuse to accept the Service of the Poor, in exchange for their Wealth? This would be an hard Question, were there not an equal Necessity on both Sides; had not Providence so ordered it, that the Rich can no more live without the Poor, than the Poor without the Rich; which being the Case, the Poor, who are able to assist the Rich, can never want a Means of Subsistence. How would a rich Man differ from a poor one, were he to serve himself in all the Necessities of Life? What would signify your large Tracts of Land, were you to plough and sow with your own Hands? What Pleasure or Advantage would your numerous Flocks yield, were you to spin the Wool yourselves, before you could be defended from the Winter's Frost? Since then the Rich are under a Necessity of being served by the Poor, as much as the Poor are  
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## DISCOURSE VIII. 193

of being maintained by the Rich, it evidently follows, that the Rich have as good a Right to require Service from the Poor, as the Poor have to demand Maintenance from the Rich ; and consequently the Rich may as reasonably withdraw their Maintenance, as the Poor withdraw their Service ; which shews the Equity of the Rule in general, *If any Man will not work, neither let him eat* ; for, in Truth, were the Poor to be maintained without working, the Rich would be in the worse Case of the two ; but there can be no Obligation on the Rich to exercise a Charity, which would destroy the very Distinction of Rich and Poor ; and therefore there can be no Obligation on the Rich to maintain an idle Poverty.

It is evidently then agreeable to Reason and Equity, that the Poor, who have Strength and Ability for Labour, should work for their Living. Let us in the next Place consider, how the Duty of the Rich stands with respect to this Sort of Poor.

The Right which all Men have to Maintenance and Subsistence is a superior Right to that of Property ; for the great Law of Self-preservation is antecedent to all private Laws and Possessions whatever ; the Consequence



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quence of which is, that in the last Result, the Property of the Rich is subject to the Maintenance of the Poor. Since then the Rich cannot in Reason preserve their Property longer than the Poor a Way of Maintenance; and since the Poor have no other Way, ordinarily speaking, but their Labour; it follows, that the Rich are as much obliged to employ the Poor, as the Poor are to work for the Rich; and one is as much the necessary Consequence of the Distinction between Rich and Poor, as the other.

As reasonable as this may seem upon the general View, yet it is hard to tell every particular rich Man, what the Measure of his Duty is, in this Case; or how many Poor he ought to employ: but the Wisdom of Providence has in great Measure superseded this Difficulty; for a rich Man cannot enjoy his Estate, cannot live answerably to his Fortune and Condition, without creating a great Deal of Work, for the Support and Encouragement of the Poor. The gayest of their Attire comes through the Hands of the Poor; and he that makes a fine Garment for you, will earn a coarse one at least for himself; he that searches the Seas and Woods to furnish Dainties to your Table, supplies

## DISCOURSE VIII. 195

supplies his own at the same Time with wholesome, though less delicious Fare. Every Man therefore, who lives answerably to his Condition, does his Part in furnishing the Poor with Work and Maintenance: and in this Method the Poor receive Support from the Rich in Proportion to the different Degrees of their Wealth; for if all live suitably to their Condition, every Man will furnish Work to the Industrious, in Proportion to his Fortune.

Upon this View of the World, you may judge what real Iniquity there is in the Temper and Practice of the covetous penurious Miser: that he denies himself the Comforts and Enjoyments of Life, is the least Part of his Crime; for whilst he pinches himself, he starves the Poor; and, by living like a Beggar in the Midst of Plenty, he withdraws from the Needy and Industrious that Maintenance which God has appointed for them. Human Laws have provided no Remedy for this Evil, nor indeed can they; but it may one Day perhaps be found as criminal to rob the Poor of their Work, as to rob the Rich of their Possessions. Nay, this Oppression often meets with its Reward in the second or

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third Generation, even in this World. It is common to see the Miser's Son or Grandson squander the Wealth of his Ancestor, with the utmost Folly and Profuseness : and when we behold such Instances, can we help thinking, that the Providence of God is using the Extravagance of the Son, to do justice to the Poor, who were injured and oppressed by the Penury of the Father? For whatever Mischief Extravagancy may do to private Men and Families, yet this Good at least flows from it, that the same Extravagance which is the Undoing of a vain rich Man, often makes Way for the Advancement of many an industrious poor one ; or is at least, for the Time it lasts, a new Fund of Work thrown into the Maintenance of the Needy.

Whenever this ordinary Method of supporting the Poor fails, the providing for them is a Debt lying over the Possessions of the Rich, as a necessary Condition of that Law which secures them in their Property, by making it penal for the Poor to dispossess them by Force or Violence. And this shews the Reasonableness of our own Law, which has subjected all the Estates and Fortunes of the Kingdom to the Maintenance of the Poor,

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## DISCOURSE VIII. 197

Poor, in Defect of other Means; which is not a new Burthen laid on private Property by the mere Strength of an arbitrary Law, but is the Voice of Reason and Nature, acknowledged and enforced by the Wisdom and Power of the Legislature.

You see then how the Duties arising from the Distinction of Rich and Poor, stand upon the Foot of natural Reason and Equity.

The Gospel, though it has left Men in Possession of their ancient Rights, yet has it enlarged the Duties of Love and Compassion; and taught rich Men to consider the Poor, not only as Servants, but as Brethren; and to look upon themselves not only as the Masters, but as the Patrons and Protectors of the Needy. Upon this View, the industrious Poor are entitled to the rich Man's Charity; since in the Candour of the Gospel, we ought to assist our poor Neighbours, not only to live, but to live comfortably: and an honest laborious Poverty has Charms in it to draw Relief from any rich Man, who has the Heart of a Christian, or even the Bowels of Nature. Mean Families, though perhaps they may subsist by their Work, yet go through much Sorrow to



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earn their Bread; if they complain not, they are more worthy of Regard; their silent Suffering, and their contented Resignation to Providence, entitle them to the more Compassion; and there is a Pleasure not to be described in Words, which the rich Man enjoys, when he makes glad the Hearts of such patient Sufferers; and, by his Liberality, makes them for a Time forget their Poverty and Distress; that even with respect to the present Enjoyments, the Words of the Text are verified; *It is more blessed to give, than to receive.*

But, to speak of the Duty strictly, Charity must begin where the Maintenance of the Poor fails; for whenever it becomes impossible for them to provide for themselves, it becomes the Duty of others to provide for them. Now Work being the Maintenance of the Poor, it is evident, that whenever their Work fails, they become Objects of Charity: and this happens many Ways; sometimes it happens for want of Employment; and whenever it does, it is a noble Instance of Charity to furnish Work for such useful Hands. It is a Charity which the Rich may make subservient, either to their Pleasure or their Profit; and be it  
either

## DISCOURSE VIII. 199

either Profit or Pleasure which accrues to the Rich Man, as it arises from Charity, it will bring a Blessing along with it; and look, whatsoever he doth, it shall prosper.

Sometimes their Want arises from Idleness, which is generally attended with great Corruption of Morals. When this is the Case, it is a Kindness, rather than a Punishment, to enure them to Labour by wholesome Discipline: for Work being the poor Man's Maintenance, Idleness in him is the same Thing as Extravagance in the Rich; one destroys the Substance of the Poor, as effectually as the other does the Substance of the Rich.

That the Young, and the Old, whose Years render them incapable of taking Care of themselves; that the Impotent and Lame, who have not only the Necessities, but the Miseries of Life to struggle with; that the diseased in Body and Mind, who want either Strength or Reason to direct it to any useful Purposes, are all fit Objects of Christian Charity and Compassion, is too well known to be insisted on. These Calamities, which are incident to human Life, and are not always the Consequences of Vice and Immorality, but come either in the Course of

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Nature, or are sent by the secret Disposition of the Almighty, what are they, but the Voice of Providence, the Hand of God demanding Charity?

To direct you to the proper Methods of Charity, in regard to the several Objects described, that the Offering of an honest Heart may not be lost through Misapplication; would be an useful, were it a necessary Part of this Day's Work: but behold, these Objects are all before you, and the Reports now to be read of the charitable Institutions of this ancient and worthy City, will shew you in what Hands you may safely trust, whatever your Heart inclines you to offer to God for the Relief of the Miserable.

*Here the Report was read.*

You have had now the State of these Charities set before you; you see how usefully their Revenue is applied, and yet how short it falls of the several Occasions. It remains on my Part, that, for the Encouragement of your Liberality, I should speak to the last Thing proposed, namely,

What is the Blessing and Reward attending on the faithful Discharge of this Duty: *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

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## DISCOURSE VIII. 201

The Time already spent admonishes me to be short. In a Word then : If you compare the Conditions into which Men are divided, and the several Duties ; if you consider the Obligation the Rich are under to assist the Needy, and compare it with the much harder Obligation the Poor are under to toil for a mean Livelihood ; you will have Reason to bless God, who has placed you on the happier Side, and to comply with the Duty of your Station with all Thankfulness to the Almighty, and to acknowledge, that he has chosen for you the better Part ; and if you discharge the Duties proper to your Condition, you may have this Comfort added to it, it shall not be taken from you.

*2dly*, In regard to the present Pleasure and Satisfaction attending upon Works of Charity, the Giver has in all Respects a better Share than the Receiver. The poor Man has a present Comfort in the Relief of Charity ; it is Ease to his Suffering, and it is an Encouragement to see that his Poverty is not despised by his richer Neighbours, who are so compassionate, as to come to the Support and Assistance of it. But what is this to the Joy of giving Ease and Comfort  
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## 202 DISCOURSE VIII.

to the Oppressed ; it is a Godlike Virtue to do Good, and the Pleasure of it has something in it so divine, that Words cannot express. *To be Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, to be a Father to the Poor,* and a Defender of all under Oppression, are Characters which bear some Resemblance to the Prerogatives of the Almighty, and are the noblest Efforts of a rational Mind, aspiring to be like its great Creator.

3dly, If we look beyond this present Scene, the Difference is wider. There is no Virtue in being relieved ; a poor Man is not a better Man for the Charity he receives ; it brings with it an Increase of Duty, and calls upon him for a more sure Trust on God, for greater Thankfulness to him ; and some Obligations it lays him under, with Respect to his Benefactors here. And it may happen, that the Charity, which is his present Relief, may be a Burthen upon his future Account ; and will be so, if he misapplies the Gift. But the Giver has a better Prospect before him ; Charity is the Discharge of a Duty, and has the general Promises of Obedience ; it is a Virtue likewise distinguished from the Rest, and has its own Reward ; the Blessings of the Life which

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## DISCOURSE VIII. 203

is, and of that which is to come : it is a Debt which God will own at the last Day; it is a Treasure transferred to Heaven, and will be repaid in never failing Riches. To conclude, Charity is a double Maintenance; it gives temporal Life to the Poor, and spiritual Life to the Rich : it bestows the Comforts of this World on the Receiver, and the Glories of Immortality on the Giver.

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# DISCOURSE VII.

...and yet that which is so common; it is  
 that which God will give to the last day;  
 it is a Treasure manifested in Heaven; and  
 will be repaid in never-fading Treasures. To  
 conduct, O my friends, is a noble Maintenance;  
 it gives eternal life to the poor, and the  
 final life to the Rich: it follows the  
 Commands of this World on the Reason of, and  
 the Glories of Immortality on the Other.

...and yet that which is so common; it is  
 that which God will give to the last day;  
 it is a Treasure manifested in Heaven; and  
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 final life to the Rich: it follows the  
 Commands of this World on the Reason of, and  
 the Glories of Immortality on the Other.

...and yet that which is so common; it is  
 that which God will give to the last day;  
 it is a Treasure manifested in Heaven; and  
 will be repaid in never-fading Treasures. To  
 conduct, O my friends, is a noble Maintenance;  
 it gives eternal life to the poor, and the  
 final life to the Rich: it follows the  
 Commands of this World on the Reason of, and  
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## DISCOURSE IX.

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MATT. xviii. 29, 30.

*And his Fellow Servant fell down at his Feet,  
and besought him, saying, Have Patience  
with me, and I will pay thee all.*

*And he would not ; but went and cast him  
into Prison, till he should pay the Debt.*

**W**HEN we consider the various Calamities and Distresses under which many Persons and Families labour ; and their utter Inability to support themselves under these Evils, it is some Alleviation to observe with what Diligence and Application Christian Charity has been at work to find proper Methods for the Comfort and Support of such as are in Misery and Affliction.

This



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This Thought arises naturally from the Business of this Day. And surely, this great and worthy City never appears more honourable in the Sight of God and Man, than when assembled for the Sake and on the Behalf of those, who have nothing to plead for them, but their Misery; and nothing to return, but their Prayers.

As the charitable Institutions under your Direction and Government have no Use of Riches or Possessions but for the Supply of the Needy; the true Way of estimating their Condition is, to consider the Proportion which their Revenues bear to the Necessities of those who stand in Need of their Assistance. If the Poor thrive and grow able to support themselves, the Hospitals grow rich in Proportion; if the Poor and their Wants increase, the Hospitals themselves grow poor, and become the Object of every Christian's Charity.

From hence it is evident, that whoever, by any Methods of Oppression or Cruelty, adds to the Number of the Poor and Miserable, does as truly act in Opposition to these charitable Foundations, and the End for which they are instituted, as if he took from them their Possessions. For whether  
you

## DISCOURSE IX. 207

you increase their Burthen, or lessen their Maintenance, it is the same Thing.

There are few who will suspect themselves to be chargeable with any Design against these Charities; and there are, I believe, few indeed, who have any formed Design against them. But if you consider the Case in the View now opened to you, it may appear, perhaps, that there are many who act daily in Opposition to this good Work, increasing that Burthen, which is already almost insupportable.

There are many Ways which Men practise in oppressing the Poor, which might properly fall under this Consideration; but I shall confine myself to that single Instance, to which the Text relates, the Hardheartedness and Cruelty, which Men use towards their poor insolvent Debtors. And I the rather choose to speak to this Case, because Men are apt to imagine that Conscience has nothing to do in it, and that they are secure from any Guilt, so long as they follow in a legal Manner the Method prescribed by the Law. Perhaps too, for a like Reason, this Iniquity has been less reprov'd, than it deserves, by the Preacher; for fear he should  
be

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be thought to condemn the Law of his Country.

I have no such Fear; nor do I mean to condemn the Law of my Country, or to charge it with the Cruelty of those who abuse it. If the Law itself is severe, the more Reason there is to be cautious in the Use of it: but if Men will turn the Law, which was given them for the Security of their Property, into an Instrument of Oppression and Revenge, the Law is free, but they are guilty. And, without doubt, there have been many legal Proceedings in Courts of Justice, which, when they come to be re-examined in a higher Court, the Judge and the Jury shall be praised for executing the Law faithfully, and yet the Prosecutor condemned for Violence and Oppression.

There is a plain Difference between the Laws made for the public Good and Safety, and those introduced in Favour of private Persons; only with Respect to the first mentioned Laws, it is often criminal to conceal Offences committed against them, or to compound for them with the Offenders. To conceal Treason is an Offence of a very high Nature; for every Man is concerned

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## DISCOURSE IX. 209

in the Life and Welfare of the King, and bound to defend him. To compound with Thieves and Robbers is criminal, for this plain Reason among others, that whoever treats with a Thief for his Impunity, treats for a greater Interest than he has a Right to dispose of; for every Man has an Interest in bringing such Offenders to Justice: and therefore no Man can remit the Penalty, but he who has a Right to act for the Public, that is, the King only.

But as to the Laws introduced for the Sake of private Rights and Properties, the Case is otherwise. For as every Man may dispose of his own Rights and Properties as he thinks fit, so he is at Liberty to use the Methods which the Law has provided for the Recovery of his Rights, or not to use them, as he pleases. In all these Cases therefore the Law provides the Remedy, and leaves the Use of it to the Conscience of the Party concerned.

Since then Men are to be governed by the Rules of Reason and Conscience, in the legal Prosecution of their own Rights; I desire you to consider with me, what it is that Reason and Conscience and Christian

P

Charity



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Charity require of us in the Case now under Consideration.

The Words of the Text are Part of one of our Saviour's Parables. They do not contain an historical Account of a Fact, supposed to have happened just as it is related: but here is a Case stated by our blessed Lord, with such Circumstances as he thought proper to support the Inference to be drawn from it; and therefore the Circumstances are to be considered as necessary Ingredients in the Judgment, which he makes upon this Case. Observe then,

*First*, Here is a Debt supposed to be justly due. The poor Man owed his Fellow Servant an hundred Pence.

*Secondly*, When the Debt is demanded, he does not deny it, or refuse to pay it, but desires Forbearance only, till he could by his Labour and Industry raise enough to discharge the Debt.

*Thirdly*, He asks even this as a Favour, and with great Submission: he fell down at his Fellow Servant's Feet, and besought him. On the contrary,

*Fourthly*, The Creditor comes with Insolence and Violence to demand his Debt. *He laid*

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## DISCOURSE IX. 211

*laid Hands on his Fellow Servant, and took him by the Throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.* And when the poor Man besought him to have Patience, he regarded him not, but hurried him away to Prison; and for this Behaviour he is called, ver. 32. *Thou wicked Servant.*

Some of these Circumstances seem to be added, to aggravate the Cruelty of this wicked Servant; such are they which describe the Violence used on one Side, and the Submission and Intreaty offered on the other. And the Case commonly falls out to be so. Men are apt to demand their Debts, especially from their Equals or Inferiors, with a Haughtiness and Roughness hard to be borne; and yet the poor Debtor is forced by Necessity to take it patiently, and to be all Submission.

But the Circumstances upon which the Reason of the Case depends, are principally these two: *First*, That the Debtor was not able to discharge the Debt at the Time of the Demand. *Secondly*, That he was willing to do Justice to his Creditor, and to endeavour, by the best Means he could use, to raise a Sum sufficient to answer the Demand. Therefore where either of these Circum-

## 212 DISCOURSE IX.

stances are wanting, the Reason of the Case ceases, and together with it all Pleas for Forbearance and Compassion. Consequently every Man is at Liberty, in Point of Conscience, to use the Method which the Law of his Country directs; to compel those to pay their Debts, who are able, but not willing to pay them. And in Truth, where this is the Case, the Creditor is so far from being justly chargeable with Cruelty or Oppression in making Use of any legal Method to recover his own, that the Charge lies strongly against the other Side. To delay poor Traders, or others, in the Payment of what is due to them, is always Injustice, and sometimes very barbarous Injustice. A poor Man may perhaps lose his Credit, which is the Life of his Business, or perhaps his Liberty, which is the Life and Maintenance of himself and Family, for Want of that very Money which you detain from him: and when this happens, is it any Compensation to pay the Man at last what is owing to him? So far from it, that such a Debtor, even when his Debt is paid, may stand charged in Conscience with the Ruin of a poor Family.

Another Circumstance, upon which the  
Judgment

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## DISCOURSE IX. 213

Judgment of our Saviour in this Case depends, is, that there be a Readiness and Willingness in the Debtor, to do Justice whenever he is able, and to use his best Endeavours to enable himself to do it. Consequently all such Debtors are out of this Case, who deny their just Debts, or any Part of them; and all such as may be justly suspected to conceal their Effects, in order to defraud their Creditors: and such also, as live idly and profusely, squandering the Estate which ought to be applied to do Justice to those to whom it is due. The Reason of these Exceptions may be made plain in few Words. The present Inability of a Debtor is the Argument for the Delay and the Forbearance; but this Inability comes not into Question where the Debt itself is denied. And since the Circumstances of Men change so fast as they do, the Man who wants Forbearance this Year, may in a few more be better able to pay the Debt, than the other is to forgive it: and what Reason can be given why he should not? Now he who denies the Debt, declares an Intention never to pay it; which certainly will justify the other, in endeavouring by a legal Method to maintain and ascertain his



## 214 DISCOURSE IX.

Right; and till the Right is cleared, there is no Room for one Side to plead, or the other Side to consider the Arguments for Pity and Compassion.

The second Exception relates to a Case which is so manifestly fraudulent, that nothing can be said in its Excuse. They who conceal their Effects, and plead Poverty deceitfully, are mere Cheats, and deserve no Compassion. To prevent such Frauds, and to arm the Creditor with Power to compel a Discovery, seems to me to be the chief View and Design of the Law, which puts the Body of the Debtor into the Creditor's Power: and so odious is this Deceit, that the Law, in some Cases and Circumstances, has annexed to it a far greater Penalty.

The third Exception relates to those, who oftentimes are free enough of their Promises to do Justice, and yet by their Actions declare daily, that they have nothing less at Heart than to do justly by their Creditors. Such are they who live idly and profusely, and are constantly diminishing what they have, and by so doing are rendering themselves less able every Day to pay their just Debts. Now, what Reason can  
you

## DISCOURSE IX. 215

you imagine, that is proper to be laid before an honest industrious Man, to persuade him to be content that his own Family should suffer, and his Substance be wasted by the Folly and Extravagance of a Stranger? Such a Man would certainly punish and restrain a Son of his own, were he idle and extravagant; and what Kind of Goodness or Charity is it, to maintain and support the like Extravagance in another? Some wise Commonwealths have debarred such Persons from the Management of their own Estates: I am sure there is more Reason to debar them from spending the Estates of other Men; and this is what every extravagant Man does, whilst he consumes his Substance, and leaves his Debts unpaid.

In these Cases, therefore, and in others of the like Nature, every good Man may, and every wise Man will, make use (in a reasonable Manner) of the Power which the Law gives him for the Security of his Property; and in so doing he stands clear of all Offence against Charity and good Conscience.

But when the Circumstances mentioned in the Text meet together; when the Debtor is chargeable with no Fault, or Fraud, but is disabled by mere Poverty to satisfy

## 216 DISCOURSE IX.

his Debts; to use the Extremity of the Law against such a Man, is not only cruel and inhuman, but, as far as I can judge, contrary to the true Meaning and Design of the Law itself. For the Law which gives Power over the Body of the Debtor, is not a criminal Law, ordained for the Punishment of Offenders; but is a Law made to secure Men in their Properties, and to guard them against the Arts and Contrivances of such as would injure them in their just Demands. To use the Law therefore, where it cannot possibly have any Effect towards securing your Property, but can serve only to harass and torment a poor unfortunate Man, is perverting the Law, and making it subservient to Purposes very different from those, for the sake of which it was ordained. The Law does not entrust private Men with the Execution, or Relaxation of its Penalties for Crimes and Offences; but in the present Case, every Man may imprison, or release from Prison, his Debtor, as he pleases; a plain Evidence that this Law was meant as a Defence of private Rights, and not as a Punishment for Criminals.

Is it then a general Rule, that the Law can never with good Conscience be executed  
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## DISCOURSE IX. 217

against insolvent Debtors? There may possibly be Exceptions, and more than I can foresee; but I think they must all be attended with this Circumstance, that there be a Prospect of recovering the Debt, though the Debtor himself be insolvent. It may so happen, that he who has nothing of his own, may have wealthy Friends and Relations; and though Friends are not often willing, for the Sake of Justice, to pay the Debts of a Relation, yet, for the Honour of the Family, or out of personal Regard to the Relation, they will pay the Money as the Price of his Redemption from a Gaol. Many Cases may be imagined, where a rich Relation ought in Reason to pay the Debt, rather than the poor Creditor to lose it. In such Cases, there may be a Reason to justify or excuse the Proceeding.

Some think that no Severity is too great to be used towards such as have spent their Estates riotously, to the Injury of their Creditors. And indeed little is to be said in Behalf of such Persons. Yet still it is worth considering, whether you would choose to be Judge and Executioner in your own Cause. And if the Case be really so desperate, that you can aim at nothing by the Execution  
of



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of the Law, but the Punishment of the Man who has wronged you, I am sure it is the safer Way to leave the Punishment to him, who has said, *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay.*

But the Case, which I have principally in View, stands clear of these Exceptions. The unfortunate Persons, with whom the Gaols are crowded, are, for the most part, such as have neither Money nor Friends to assist them; such as have fallen into Poverty by Misfortunes, by a Decay in their Business, or perhaps by the Largeness of a Family, which their utmost Diligence could not support. Were they at Liberty, they might probably be of Use to themselves, and their poor Families, and also to their Creditors, by following their honest Callings and Employments. But now their Strength consumes in vain, they starve in Prison, and their Children out of it, or are thrown upon the Parish for a miserable Maintenance; and no Benefit or Advantage accrues, or can possibly accrue, to the Person who confines them.

Men are often urged to deal thus severely with others, by the Grief and Anguish which attend the Disappointment they meet with

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## DISCOURSE IX. 219

with in their just Expectation; and being themselves Sufferers, they think no Treatment too bad for those to whom they impute their own Distress. But could Men consider calmly how much Misery they bring into the World, and how many must partake in the sad Effects of their Resentment, I am persuaded that Humanity and Compassion, Virtues to which this Country never was a Stranger, would in great Measure prevent this Evil.

When the Father of a poor Family, who have nothing to depend on for their Subsistence but his Labour and Industry, is torn from them, what can the poor Widow and Orphans do? For a Widow *she is*, and Orphans *they are*, to all the Intents and Purposes of Sorrow and Affliction. It is well if they take no worse Employment than begging; oftentimes they are tempted to pilfer or steal, or to prostrate themselves for Bread; and happy is it for them, if they meet with no worse Fortune, than to fall into your Hands to be corrected and reformed.

In the mean Time the wretched Father sees himself undone, and his Family dispersed and ruined. His Spirits sink under Sorrow, and Despair eats out his Strength and  
Life;

## 220 DISCOURSE IX.

Life; that should you in Time relent and release him, it is ten to one but the Relief comes too late. He is no longer the same Man; before his Imprisonment he was active and strong, and had Spirit to go through his Labour; now he is broken in Mind and Body, and not able to improve to any Advantage that Liberty, which at last you are willing to allow him.

Would not any one, who considers this, be apt to imagine, that no Man lies in Prison but for some great Debt; that it is impossible that any one should use another thus cruelly for a Trifle? And yet, in Truth, the Case is quite otherwise: there are few, in Comparison, who lie for great Sums; the far greater Number are confined for Trifles, for such Sums as must be reckoned by Pence, and not by Pounds. It is true, they are commonly confined at the Suit of those, who are almost as poor as themselves; and the Poverty on the one Side is often urged as a Justification of the Severity used against the other. But alas! what Relief is it to one poor Man to undo another? What Comfort is it to torment a Wretch, whose Misery can yield you no Profit or Advantage?

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## DISCOURSE IX. 221

Whether I have justly represented the Consequences of this Case, or no, you, who have the poor Orphans of this City under your Care; and you, whose charitable Work it is to correct and reform the Vicious and Profligate; are best able to say: for you know all the Distresses of the Poor, and the Causes from whence they spring. And, to your Honour I speak it, you have provided for every Evil of Life a proper Remedy, or a proper Comfort. But I need not be your Orator; your own Deeds will speak for you, far better than I can. The Report now to be read will shew both the Nature and the good Management of the several Charities under your Direction.

*Here the Report was read.*

The Account now laid before you is capable of raising very different Sentiments in the Heart of a Christian. It is a melancholy Thing to hear the poor Orphans in one Place, the profligate Vagrants in another, the Lame and Impotent in a third, and the distempered in Mind in a fourth, reckoned up by hundreds and by thousands. To what Miseries is human Life exposed!

But still, in the Midst of these Calamities, there is Reason to bless and adore the Goodness



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ness of God, who has put it into the Hearts of his Servants to provide Comfort and Relief for these Sons and Daughters of Affliction.

The richest among us, when he views these Misfortunes, sees nothing but what he is liable to himself. Examine the Condition of these Orphans, many of them perhaps born in the Midst of Plenty, though now they live on Charity. There was a Time perhaps when *their* Fathers as little thought they should be beholden to an Hospital for the Maintenance of their Children, as we may think it at this Day.

Other Calamities make no Distinction between Rich and Poor ; we have no Inheritance in the Use of our Limbs and Senses, but enjoy them by the good Pleasure of him who gave them. And whenever these Misfortunes overtake us, our Riches make but little Difference in the Case ; a rich distracted Man, and a poor distracted Man, are very near upon an Equality ; and as far as the Power of Imagination goes, they often change Conditions ; the poor Man fancying himself to be a Prince, whilst the rich one pines and torments himself with the All-fears and Anxieties of Poverty.

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## DISCOURSE IX. 223

Since then you are so nearly related to all the Miseries now placed within your View, need I say much to move Tendernefs and Compassion towards a Case already so much your own? This is a Cause which Nature will plead for in every Heart not made of Stone. But there is one still greater Advocate to plead this Cause, even he who died for our Sins, and rose again for our Justification. These Orphans, these diseased in Body or in Mind, nay, even the profligate Wretches who are brought to you for Punishment and Correction, are his Care; and whatever Charity you bestow on them, he will reckon it as done to himself, and acknowledge it in the Sight of Men and of Angels, when he shall come again to judge the World in Righteousness.

DIS-



## DISCOURSE X.

MARK iii. 24.

*If a Kingdom be divided against itself, that  
Kingdom cannot stand.*

**T**HOUGH these Words are read in the Gospel, yet they have not their Authority merely from thence; but for the Truth of the Observation contained in them, there lies an Appeal to common Sense and Experience. Our Saviour indeed, by using this Maxim, has approved it; and he could not appeal to the Judgment of all Men in this Case, without, at the same Time, declaring his own.

As Observations of this Kind depend on a great Number of Facts; so are there in the present Case a great Number to support

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it.



## 226 DISCOURSE X.

it. The many Kingdoms and Countries weakened or ruined by intestine Divisions, are so many Proofs upon Record of the Truth of this Assertion. And did we of this Country want to have this Truth cleared by such Instances, it would be but reasonable to produce the Proofs. But we have Examples of our own Growth, and stand in Need of no Assistance from foreign History. This Island has often changed its Inhabitants; but the new ones never got Possession till the old ones made Way for them, by their mutual Hatred and Animosities; and the Nation has, under very unpromising Circumstances, maintained itself against foreign Enemies, whenever it was so happy as to preserve Peace and Tranquillity at Home.

The late unhappy Times of *Charles* the First were attended with this almost peculiar Felicity, that no foreign Nation was at Leisure to take Advantage of our Divisions. *Europe* was in Arms; and the great Powers too much in Awe of each other, for any one to conceive Hopes of Success, had his Ambition inclined him to lay hold of the Opportunities, which our Distractions offered.

But

## DISCOURSE X. 227

But though there was no Enemy to ruin us, yet ruined we were. Such is the Malignity of intestine Division!

When national Quarrels grow extreme, and appear in Arms, it is easy to foresee the sad Consequences; and the coldest Imagination may be able to paint to itself the Miseries that must follow. And whoever looks back upon the many Years of Distress, under which this Country laboured in the late Times; let him view them with impartial, or with partial Eye; will see enough to convince his Judgment, how fatal a Thing it is for a Kingdom to be divided against itself. It will therefore be of little Use to enlarge on this Part of the Argument; and I the more willingly pass it over, as it will save you and me the Pain of viewing various Scenes of Woe, which that Time, fruitful in Misery, would present before us.

But there are other Evils, less discernible, which spring from the same bitter Root, and naturally prepare the Way for the greater Mischiefs to follow after: they are the first Symptoms of public Confusion; and as they influence greatly the Virtue and Morality of a Nation, they are in a more especial Manner the Preacher's Care.

Q 2

Nationa

National Divisions are sometimes founded in material Differences, such as affect the Well-being and Constitution of a Government; and sometimes owe their Rise to Accidents, and Trifles unworthy of the Concern of the Public. In this respect therefore every Case must stand on its own Bottom, and is subject to no general Observation. But all Divisions, how different soever in their Commencement, grow in their Progress to be so much alike; partly from the common Depravity of Men, who have not Virtue enough to act honestly in an honest Cause; partly from the Cunning of designing Men, who seldom want the Art to direct the public Dispute to the Service of their private Views; that there are evil Effects which may be generally ascribed to all Divisions, as the Fruit which they naturally produce.

I. The Zeal and Warmth which attend public Quarrels, are apt to get Possession of Men's Minds and Affections so far, as to render them in great Measure unable to form a right Judgment of Things and Persons.

Without a right Judgment in these respects, it is impossible for Men to be of any Service to their Country. For a Foundation  
for

## DISCOURSE X. 229

for public Good can never be laid in a wrong Judgment of Things and Persons. And yet, when Contentions run high, so hard is it, even for the coolest Heads, to form right Judgments, that it is hardly possible for them to get right Information in any Thing: the very Language of the Country is perverted by the Zeal of Parties; Honour and Honesty are Words which lose their natural Meaning, and become merely relative to the Notions of him who uses them; and when a Person is represented to us under these fair and engaging Characters, nothing can be certainly concluded, but that the Man so highly praised, and his Orator, are both of a Side.

With as little Justice are Terms of Reproach dealt about, though commonly with a more liberal Hand, as the Resentments of Anger and Contempt are usually keener and more active, than those of Love and Esteem. Men of Discernment on all Sides see the Folly and Iniquity of this Practice; yet they carry on the Work, without giving Credit to themselves, for the sake of the Multitude, who are greatly influenced, and often prepared for Mischief, by these Devices. If we look into the large List of Malignants, De-



230 DISCOURSE X.

linquents, and Persons suspected, or perhaps without Suspicion, charged as Papists, in the late Times, we shall find among them some of the wisest and best of the Nation; who, could they have had the Influence in public Affairs, which their Worth and Merit entitled them to, would have saved both their King and their Country from Oppression. But these Men were made useless: and in like Circumstances the best Men will always be so; for it must ever be their Choice rather to sink under such Artifices, than to thrive by the Use of them; and the Times leave them no other Choice.

As it is with Persons, so it is with Things. To see how obstinately and perversely Men approve or disapprove almost every Thing by the vitiated Taste of Party, one would think that Truth and Reason had left the World, or that Men were universally fallen blind. But neither have Truth and Reason left the World, nor are Men otherwise than wilfully blind. But when the Appeal is made, as in popular Cases it is, to the Multitude, the Leaders find it much easier to direct their Passions, than their Understandings. And what Reason is there to expect, that Men should take the Direction of their

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## DISCOURSE X. 231

own Eyes, when they refer themselves to the Opinion and Approbation of those who have none ?

This blind Attachment to Things and Persons tends gradually to destroy the very Notions of Right and Wrong, and to render Virtue and common Honesty of little or no Significancy in public Affairs. The lower Part of the World soon grows to be insensible of the Difference ; and by an Habit of following a false Rule of judging, they become incapable of making use of the true one. And when designing Men observe, that by doing right they cannot please their Adversaries, by doing wrong they cannot offend their Friends, they will soon disregard a Distinction, of so little Use either to their Interest or Reputation. And hence proceeds that Hardness of Mind, which no Reason, no Conviction can subdue.

How fatal an Influence this must have upon the Virtue and Morality of any People, will appear by following this Evil a few Steps further into some of its natural and obvious Consequences.

2. One great Guard to Virtue, and placed in the Minds of Men by the Hand that formed them, is the Sense of Shame when

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we do ill; of the same Kind, and a Twin of the same Birth, is the Pleasure arising from the Praise of having done well. When Men, through the Corruptness of their own Hearts, get rid of these natural Impressions, they are, in the Opinion of the World, profligate and abandoned. Of this Kind the Instances are but few. But then, to make their natural Passions of any Service to us, they must be kept true to their proper Objects, Good and Evil; and whenever the Judgment is so corrupted as to lose Sight of this Difference, the Love of Praise and the Fear of Shame will become not merely useless, but mischievous and destructive. And this must be the Case, whenever a false Standard of Reputation is set up. And when a Nation or Kingdom is divided, Honour and Reputation will be dealt out by a false Measure, and fall to their Share, who are best able, or most forward, to serve and promote the Measures of the intemperate Zeal, which possesses the one or the other Part of the Division. Thus true Honour and Virtue are robbed of their natural Forces; and the Sense of Shame and of Praise are seduced into the Service of a Faction; and so far perverted, as oftentimes to

prove

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prove Motives to Actions base and dishonourable.

3. When Praise and Reproaches are distributed with so little Justice, it has another very ill Effect in hardening Men against Reproach, even when they deserve it most. Reproach, when it falls indiscriminately on the best and the worst, loses its proper Effect; and bad Men will take Advantage of the ill Judgment of the World in abusing the best, to despise all Censure, how justly soever passed on themselves. This will by Degrees make Men insensible of the Pleasure of doing brave and generous Actions for the good of their Country; they will grow steeled and obdurate in their Minds, and, with a profligate Contempt of the Opinion of the World, enter calmly and without Remorse into any Mischief, to which Interest, Revenge, or any other mean Passion, shall invite them.

4. It is a farther Aggravation of this Evil, to consider, that this infamous Conduct seldom fails of being successful. When the Malignity of intestine Division is far spread, it becomes a Shelter for all Iniquity. Party Zeal usurps the Place of Christian Charity, and covers a Multitude of Sins.

And



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And when once Men find that there is so short a Way to Credit and Esteem, they will be tempted, through Laziness, and a natural Depravity, which will be ever ready to lay hold on such Encouragement, to decline the honourable and laborious Methods of rising to Reputation in the World, and to trust their Hopes and their Fortunes to the Merit of their Zeal; which Hopes seldom fail them. For,

5. As Credit and Reputation, the natural Rewards of Virtue, are perverted and misapplied by the blind Spirit of Division; so are the Rewards which the Public has provided and destined to the Encouragement of true Merit, diverted into a wrong Channel: the worthiest are often driven into Obscurity, and others called into Employments and Preferments, in which they can do themselves no Honour, their Country no Service.

There is not a Place in Church or State of so mean a Consideration, but that the Public has an Interest in having it supplied by a proper, and, in proportion to the Duty of the Office, an able Man. When this is the Case, the Work of Government is carried on regularly and steadily, and the Influences

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fluences of it are duly communicated, and felt in every Part: as the Blood, which moves from the Heart, cherishes and warms the extreme Parts of the Body, as long as the little Vessels which convey it are in due Order: but if these small Channels are obstructed, or lose their proper Tone, Coldness and Numbness will ensue, and sometimes greater Evils, not to be borne, nor to be cured but by the Loss of a Limb.

These are the Steps by which Division corrupts the Manners and Morality of a Nation. And what Hopes are there of seeing a People grow great and considerable, who have lost not only the Sense of Virtue, but even the Sense of Shame; who call Evil Good, and Good Evil; and are prepared to sacrifice their Reason, their true Interest, the Peace and Prosperity of their Country, to their own and their Leaders Resentments? Can it be expected that Men should form themselves by a virtuous and laborious Course of Life for the Service of a Country, where real Worth and Merit are so far out of Consideration, that the Affections and Regards of the People are tied, like the Favour of the *Roman Circus*, to the Colour of the Coat which distinguishes their Faction.

These

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These general Observations, which I have laid before you, might be justified by numberless Instances, drawn from the History of the late Times; but perhaps they may weigh more standing single by themselves, than being coupled with Facts, in which the Passions of the present Age are not unconcerned. And sufficient they are of themselves to warn all honest Men how they begin or foment the Divisions of their Country.

But yet, to do Justice to my Subject, and the solemn Occasion of this Day, it is necessary to take one Step into the History of former Times, and to view the Works of Division in its utmost Rage.

I am sensible how difficult it is to speak of any Thing relating to that unhappy Time which this Day calls to Mind; and how hardly Truth can be borne on any Side: yet shall not this discourage me from bearing my Testimony against the unnatural and barbarous Treason of this Day, and the Acts of Violence which prepared the Way for it: a Treason long since condemned by the public Voice of the Nation, in the most solemn Acts of Church and State.

I shall go on therefore to illustrate my Subject by some Examples, which the History

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## DISCOURSE X. 237

tory of the late Times affords, and which will reach to the full Extent of the Observation of my Text, that a *Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand*.

To put a Stop to Innovations, to correct the Errors or Abuses in Government, to redress the Grievances of the People by the known Rules of Parliament, is the true and ancient Method of preserving the Constitution, and transmitting it safe with all its Advantages to Posterity. But when this wholesome Physic came to be administered, as at length it did, by the Spirit of Faction and Division, it was so intemperately given, that the Remedy inflamed the Distemper; and the unhappy Contest, which began about the Rights of the King, and the Liberties of the People, ended fatally in the Destruction of both.

The Contest about civil Rights was rendered exceeding hot and fierce, by having all the Disputes and Quarrels in religious Matters, under which the Nation had long suffered, incorporated with it. By this Means Conscience was called in to animate and inflame the popular Resentments. The Effect was soon felt: the Church of *England*, which had long been the Glory and  
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the Bulwark of the Reformation, fell the first Sacrifice; and many who had served long and faithfully at her Altars, were driven out to seek their Bread in desolate Places. What came in the Room of the Church so destroyed, Time would fail me, should I pretend to recount; so many and so various were the Forms of Religion, which arose out of the Imaginations of Men set free from Government.

The Bishops of those Days were generally inclined to save and support the Crown. The Consequence drawn from thence was, that Episcopacy itself was an Usurpation. My Meaning is not, that this Argument was ever used in the Form of Logic, to convince any Man's Judgment; but it influenced the Affections of thousands, and prevailed so far as to exclude the Bishops, not only from this House, where they had sat from the earliest Foundation of the Monarchy; but from their Churches also, where they had been received and revered as Rulers and Governors, for as many Ages as can be counted from the Days of the Apostles.

But why do I mention the Exclusion of the Bishops from the House of Lords, when so much more fatal a Blow was given to the

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## DISCOURSE X. 239

the Liberties and Constitution of *England*, by declaring the House of Lords itself to be useless, and excluding the Peerage from a Share in the Legislature; a Right derived to them through a long Series of Ancestors, from Time immemorial.

The Nobility were not free from the Infection of those Times; and yet, to their Honour be it remembered, that the execrable Fact of this Day could not be carried into Execution so long as the Peerage of *England* had any Influence in the Government. But when once they were removed, and this last Support of the sinking Crown taken away, the Crown, and the Head that wore it, fell a Victim to the Rage of desperate and merciless Men.

It is said (and the Partiality I have for the Honour of my Country makes me willingly repeat it), that few, very few in Comparison were wicked enough, and bold enough, to dip their Hands in Royal Blood. But then, how fatal to Kingdoms is the Spirit of Faction and Division, which could in the Course of a few Years throw all the Powers of the Kingdom into the Hands of a few desperate Men; and enable them to trample under Foot the Crowns and the  
Heads

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Heads of Princes, the Rights and Honours of the ancient Nobility, the Liberties and Properties of a free People, and to tear up the very Foundations of our once happy and envied Constitution!

Could these Acts of Violence, and the Causes which produced them, be suffered to lie quiet in History, as so many Marks to point out to us the Rocks and Shelves on which our Fathers made Shipwreck, we their Sons might be the wiser and the better for their Calamities. But if we permit their Passions and Resentments to descend on us; if we keep the old Quarrels alive by mutual Reproaches and Invectives, what else are we doing, but nursing up the Embers of that Fire which once consumed these Kingdoms, and which may again burst out into a destroying Flame? But I forbear; and will forbode no Evil to my Country.

The Application of what has been said is so natural and obvious, that were it pardonable to omit it on this Occasion, I should hardly mention it.

There is no Pleasure in viewing the Follies and Distractions of former Times; nor is there any Advantage, unless it is in order to grow better and wiser by the Example which

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which History sets before us. In the present Case we have the Experience, which cost the Nation dear, to warn both Rulers and Subjects, how carefully they should avoid all Occasions of Division. The true Way to do it is, for each Side to maintain its own Rights, without encroaching on those of the other; for the Constitution must suffer, whenever the Rights of the Crown, or the Liberties of the People, are invaded. And though every *Briton* is to be commended if he is fond, and may be indulged, when he is over fond (if such a Case can be) of the Liberties of his Country; yet he ought always to remember, that as the People have their Liberties, so the King has his Rights, which are derived from the same Constitution, and the same Law, under which the People claim their Liberties: and indeed the People have an Interest and Inheritance in the Rights of the Crown, which are so many Trusts lodged in the Hands of the Prince for the Defence and Protection of the People, and to enable him the better to carry on the necessary Works of Government.

To conclude: As we have a Prince on the Throne, under whose Government,

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though some have complained, yet none have suffered, in the least of their Rights, by any Act of Power; who has shewn himself not only careful, but even jealous for the Liberties of his People; let us in Return yield him that Share in our Hearts and Affections, which is so justly due to him; and is a Recompence, the easiest for good Subjects to pay, and yet the most valuable that a good Prince can receive.

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## DISCOURSE XI.

LUKE X. 36, 37.

*Which now of these three thinkest thou was Neighbour unto him that fell among the Thieves? And he said, He that shewed Mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

THE Case of the good Samaritan, to which the Text has relation, was not principally intended to shew the Necessity of Works of Mercy, or to recommend them to the Practice of the World; these were Points in which our Lord, and the Person with whom he discoursed, had no Difference. Nor is there in the World any material Difference in Opinion upon this Point, as long as the Duty is recommended in general Propositions, and Application is made

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to the common Sentiments of Humanity in Behalf of the Miseries and Sufferings of our Fellow Creatures. Nor are these Sentiments peculiar to Christianity; they have their Foundation in Nature, and extend as far as Reason and Sense prevail; and it is to the Pen of an Heathen we owe that memorable saying, *Homo sum, nihil humanum a me alienum puto.*

But however agreeable these Works are to the Sense and Reason of Mankind, whilst they consider them only in general, yet in making the Application to particular Cases in order to Practice, many Difficulties are moved; and Men, unwilling to undergo the Trouble or the Expence which attend on Works of Charity, or lay aside their Prejudices and Resentments against Persons whose Misfortunes and Calamities have reduced them to be Objects of Charity, have found out many Limitations on these Duties; and have let in so many partial Considerations and Restrictions, that Mercy and Humanity, which naturally extend to all the World, seldom reach to one Country, oftentimes not to all the Parts of one Family.

To remove these Kinds of Pretences or Prejudices, was the direct View of our Lord in

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in stating the Case of the good *Samaritan*; and the Person discoursing with him led him into this Consideration, by admitting the Love of our Neighbour to be a fundamental Duty, and immediately enquiring after Limitations and Restrictions upon the Practice of the Duty. That this was the Case will appear upon considering the whole Passage, of which the Text is a Part.

At the 25th Verse, a Lawyer stood up, and tempted our Lord, saying, *Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal Life?* Our Lord refers him to the Law, and asks him what he read there. He answers out of the Law—*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; and thy Neighbour as thyself.* Our Saviour replies, *Thou hast answered well: this do, and thou shalt live.* Thus far all was right; and had the Enquirer stopt here, we should have had no Reason to suspect but that his Principles at least were sound and uncorrupt. He had great Reason to be satisfied with the Answer, when he had received that Approbation from our Lord, *This do, and thou shalt live.*—But he goes on, and in the Words of the 29th Verse it follows,—*But he, wil-*



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*ling to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my Neighbour?* What now is it that he would justify himself from? No Charge had been brought against him; so far from it, that our Lord had commended his discreet Answer; and if he acted according to the Terms he had proposed, our Lord had promised him Life. This can be no otherwise accounted for but from the Consciousness of the Person himself, who knew very well that his Practice was not conformable to the general Rule he had laid down, and which had been approved and commended by our Lord. Our Saviour's saying to him, *THIS DO, and thou shalt live*, called him to compare his Practice with the Rule he had proposed; and upon a secret Comparison made in his own Mind, he found that to justify himself, the Terms of the Rule must be explained and limited; and therefore he says, *Who is my Neighbour?* In the Sense of the Law, and according to our Saviour's Exposition of it, every Man who wants our Assistance, and whom we are able to assist, is our Neighbour, and as such entitled to our good Offices. The *Jews* had some very near Neighbours, in the restrained Sense of the Word, with whom they were so far from

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from entertaining any Intercourse of good Offices, that all common Civilities had ceased among them: those were the *Samaritans*; and so far were the Resentments of the *Jews* carried, that when our Saviour desired a Woman of *Samaria* to give him a little Water to drink, she expresses great Wonder at it, and says, *How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest Drink of me, which am a Woman of Samaria?* And the Evangelist gives the Reason of her Wonder—for the *Jews* have no Dealings with the *Samaritans*—(John iv. 9.) This being the Case, when our Saviour put eternal Life upon Obedience to this Law, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*, there was great Reason to ask the Question, *Who is my Neighbour?* Had our Lord told him, in Conformity to the Opinions and Practices of the *Jews*, that they only were Neighbours who were of the Family and Stock of *Abraham*, or of the same Faith and Religion with themselves, the Man had found what he sought after, a Justification of himself: but when our Saviour, demanding his Opinion upon the Case of the good *Samaritan*, had forced him into a Confession that even the *Samaritan* was his Neighbour, he stood con-

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demned out of his own Mouth ; and upon the Example of one, whom he reckoned his Enemy, was sent away with this short Re-proof and Admonition, *Go, and do thou likewise.*

The Parable of the good *Samaritan* is so well known, that I shall but just mention the Circumstances of it :—One travelling from *Jerusalem* fell among Thieves, was robbed and wounded. A Priest and a *Levite* ; who were, in every Sense of the Word, Neighbours to the unfortunate Man ; and if, in Duties of common and general Obligation, one can be more obliged than another, they were, by Character, especially obliged to relieve this poor Neighbour ; but they looked on him, and passed by on the other Side. A *Samaritan*, excluded by the *Jews* from all Rights of Neighbourhood, came by, and had Compassion on the Sufferer ; he dressed his Wounds himself, and afterwards placed him, at his own Expence, under the Care of one, who was to see the Cure perfected.

The Question now was, who was Neighbour to this unfortunate Man, in the Sense of the Law, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.* As the Case was stated, there was

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no Room to insist on the near Relation the Priest and *Levite* bore to the wounded Man; the nearer their Relation, the worse Neighbours were they for neglecting him; no Room to object against the *Samaritan*, his Want of Relation, or his Difference in Religion; the less and the fewer his private Obligations were, the more disinterested was his Obedience to the Law, and the better Neighbour was he. Upon the whole of this Case, our *Lord's* Conclusion is, *Go, and do thou likewise.*

Taking then this Direction of our blessed Saviour, as it stands explained by these Circumstances, it will lead us to consider,

I. The Nature and Extent of Charity, or Love to our Neighbour.

II. The Value of the Excuses which Men frequently make for Neglect of this Duty. And,

III. The Excellency of that particular Charity, which gives Occasion to this Day's Meeting.

I. Of the Nature and Extent of Charity, or Love to our Neighbour.

I observed to you before, that the principal Intention of our blessed Saviour was not to shew the Necessity of Works of Mercy, for



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for that under certain Limitations was admitted on all Sides. Nor was it to recommend one Kind of Charity in Preference to another, but to shew the Extent of all. In stating a Case, it was necessary to instance in some Sort of charitable Work; but the Conclusion, *Go, and do thou likewise*, is not confined to that Kind of Work only, but is intended to shew us who are our Neighbours in Regard to Works of Mercy and Compassion in every Kind.

The Works of Mercy are as various, and of as many Kinds, as the Wants and Infirmities of Men, which are the Objects of Mercy. Were Men perfect, there would be nothing in them to pity or compassionate. Every Kind, therefore, and every Degree of Misery is an Object of Mercy; and whether Men are exposed to Calamities by the Necessity of their Condition, and the overruling Providence of God; or whether they bring them on themselves by Sin and Wickedness, or by Folly and Indiscretion; yet still, considered as miserable, they are Objects of Pity. If this were not so, Mercy would not be one of the Attributes of the Deity. For he is not moved by a Fellow-feeling of our Calamities, or any Apprehen-  
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sion for himself; for no Evil can approach him. Sin and Wickedness are attended with Guilt as well as Misery, and therefore also Objects of Justice and Punishment; and it may, perhaps, be a Case attended with Difficulties, when we attempt to reconcile the Operations of Justice and Mercy, with Respect to the same Subject. But if God be a God of Mercy, as undoubtedly he is, the Conclusion must stand, that Misery, viewed by the Eye of Reason, is an Object of Compassion; and the Consequence must be, that, in the Reason of Things, Mercy is as extensive as Misery; and not to be confined, by any particular or partial Considerations, to Misery of one Kind, or of one Man more than another. If we consider ourselves, therefore, merely as reasonable Creatures, no Reason can be assigned for excluding any Object of Misery from our Pity and Compassion. But if we consider ourselves as Men, there is another and perhaps a more sensible Inducement to the Practice of the Works of Mercy, and which upon Examination will be found, as far as our Power of doing good goes, of like general Influence. And this arises from reflecting, that there is no Misery we see, to which we are not ourselves

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selves liable. The Case therefore of the Miserable is a common Case, and in some Sense every Man's own. If we find ourselves better than others, so as to avoid the Calamities which Sin and Iniquity bring upon many; or wiser than others, so as to shun the Evils which Folly and Indiscretion draw down upon Numbers; this is so far from being a Reason why we should despise or neglect their Sufferings, that it daily reminds us to ask of ourselves this Question, *Who made thee to differ from another?* And if we answer it as we should, it will furnish us with another Reason for the Exercise of Charity, which will extend to all Men.

For, if all Men are the Sons of one common Father; if all Conditions of Life are the Appointment of one common Master; no Man can be reckoned a Stranger to us, who is Son of the same Father, and Servant of the same Master; however he may, for Reasons unknown to us, be placed in a lower Condition of Life, and called to serve in a meaner Station, endowed with less and fewer Abilities.

Carry these Considerations with you into the World, and view the Wants and Necessities of the Poor; listen to the Cries of  
Widows.



## DISCOURSE XI. 253

Widows and Orphans, to the Moans and Complaints of those who suffer under the Torments of Body or of Mind: take into your View the Follies and the Weaknesses of Men, who are perpetually struggling with the Inconveniences, which a little Prudence might have prevented, but which require a great Deal of Care and Sorrow either to cure, or to bear them; and think a little, what Reason, what the Sense of your own Infirmities, what the Regard due to the common Father and Master of all, require at your Hands. One duly attentive to these Reasons, could never fall into the little Considerations, whether *this* miserable Man was his Countryman or Townsman, whether *the other* was of the same Party or Opinion with himself; for the great and true Reasons on which Mercy and Charity are founded, exclude all such little Respects and Relations.

As the Case stands thus upon the Foot of Reason, and the natural Sentiments of Men, so likewise have the Precepts of the Gospel bound these Duties upon us in the same Extent.

Honour, Esteem, and Reverence, are due to those who deserve Honour, Esteem, and Reverence;



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Reverence; but Love is a Debt due to all Men, and is a Debt never to be fully paid and exhausted. Therefore St. *Paul* commands, that we *render* to every Man *his Due*, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour *is due*: but when he comes to speak of Love, he varies his Style, and considers us in this Respect as Debtor to every Man: *owe* no Man any Thing, *but to love one another*. As if he had said, all other Debts due to particular Persons, you must take Care to discharge; but Love is due to all, and you must never think of paying or clearing the Debt of Love to each other; for that is a Debt which will be owing as long as you live; it is a perpetual Duty, and can never have an End. In the same Manner are the Precepts of Love and Mercy enjoined by our blessed Saviour in general Terms, not confining them to particular Objects, but leaving them at large, and open, to be applied to all Men: *Blessed*, says he, *are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy*. Had this been a Duty owing to any Persons, as they stand particularly related to us, our Lord would not have left this material Duty imperfect, by neglecting to specify the proper Objects of it; but having directed our

Love

## DISCOURSE XI. 255

Love and Mercy to no Men in particular, we must conclude that all in general are the Objects of it.

If we consider these Laws as derived from the Author of Nature, and of the Gospel, we shall find that they proceeded from a Love as universal as that which they enjoin; the general Good of Mankind is the End provided for in these Laws. The Miseries and Calamities of Life are many, and not to be avoided; and perhaps wise Men, though they complain least, feel them most. It is a melancholy Thing to reflect how much of this Misery is of our own making, and what a great Abatement might be made in the Sorrows of Life, if every Man would but lend his Hand to make himself and the rest of the World happy. The unkind Offices we daily receive from Malice, Ill-nature, and Revenge, from Envy, and causeless Resentments, make a much greater Figure in the Calamities of Life, than all the Evils which the Providence of God and the Condition of human Life bring on us. And even the Calamities which cannot be avoided, might be mitigated by the kind Offices of our Brethren. And therefore to oblige Men to Charity and Mercy, is to unite them

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in a Confederacy against the Evils and Miseries of Life; that no sooner shall Misfortune seize one, but all shall be alarmed, and Help flow in from every Quarter; that every Hand shall bring Assistance, and every Tongue bring Comfort to the Afflicted; and each Man's Happiness be the common Concern, while every Man loves his Neighbour as himself. What a blessed State would this be! and how much Happiness did the wise Author of Nature design for us, when he made the common Interest of Mankind to be every particular Man's Duty! What Love to Man did the Author of the Gospel shew, when he required it, as a Mark of our being his Disciples, that we should love one another!

Having considered now the Extent of this great Duty of Love and Mercy towards our Brethren, it will be easy in the second Place to estimate by this Measure what Value there is in the Excuses which are frequently made for the Neglect of this Duty.

But to speak without Confusion on this Subject, it is necessary to distinguish between Love, as merely a Sentiment and Habit of the Mind, and as coupled with a Power and Ability to exert itself in external Acts of Mercy

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Mercy. Considered as an Habit and Sentiment of the Mind, it must be universal, without Exception ; and no Pretence whatever can justify Malevolence and Hatred in any Instance. But it may be, and often is the Case, that those who have the Habit of this Virtue, are able to exert it in very few Instances ; they are too poor to give Alms, too ignorant to give Advice, of too little Consideration in the World to aid or protect their Neighbours. In all these Cases Want of Ability is something more than an Excuse, for an Excuse goes to the Omission of Duty ; but there can be no Duty or Obligation on any Man to do what he has no Power or Ability to perform. But yet let the meanest among us consider, that there are Duties of Love proper to their Station ; if they have no Money to bestow, yet they have good or ill Words to bestow on their Neighbours ; they are able to assist in vindicating or aspersing their Characters ; and this is an Instance in which their Good-will or Malevolence may be as effectually shewn, as if they had great Revenues to dispose of ; and I am afraid the poorer Sort, who are Petitioners for Charity of another Kind,

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want often to be put in Mind of *this Kind* of Charity themselves. But to go on.

Where Men's Fortunes and Stations in the World enable them to exert their Love and Mercy in Acts of Generosity and Benevolence to Persons in Distress, there is often an Unwillingness, and always an Excuse to attend it. From what has been said of the Duty in general, it is evident, that to confine our Charity to Relations, Acquaintance, or Men of the same Country, is acting inconsistently with the great Reasons on which the Duty itself is founded, and is therefore a Breach of Duty which cannot be justified; and it is indeed that very Pretence which our Saviour intended to exclude and condemn in the Parable of the good *Samaritan*. But what shall we say to the personal Merit of those who are Objects of Charity? In the Parable the Person relieved was a Stranger to him who relieved him, and was known to him only by his Misery and Distress; and therefore in this Example set before us, the personal Character had no Influence in the Charity. And in other Places of the Gospel we are exhorted to follow the Example set us by our heavenly Father,

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ther, who maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust. But as no Man's Ability to do good in any Way is unlimited, it is commendable surely to seek after the properest and most deserving Objects of Charity; and in this Consideration the Virtue and Innocence of the Sufferer must be of great Moment.

There would perhaps be little Reason upon the Whole to be very nice and curious in the Choice of Objects, were it not for the many Frauds and Cheats which are daily practised upon the Charity of well-disposed Persons. Begging is become a Trade, and without Doubt it is a very wicked one; it is not only a Cheat on the Giver, but it is robbing the Stock of the Poor, and perverting what was intended for the Comfort of real Distress, to the Support of Idleness. It is greatly injurious to the Poor in another Respect, as it lays a general Suspicion upon all who apply for Alms; and many a proper Object fails of the Relief due to him, because he can say no more in his true Case than Counterfeits say every Day in a false one.

There is another very great Discourage-

## 260 DISCOURSE XL

ment which charitable Persons are under, from observing the ill Use which the Poor often make of their Benefactions to them. One would imagine that a Man who wanted Food and Raiment, and all other Necessaries of Life, was pretty well secured against the Excesses of strong Liquors, or any other Temptations, which must necessarily exhaust his little Stock, and leave him unable to provide for his Wants. But the Case is far otherwise; the general Corruption of Manners too plainly to be seen in this Country, has spread among the lowest; and Necessity itself is grown luxurious. It is very much to be lamented, that so much Art and Skill have been shewn of late Years, to make Drunkenness the cheapest of all Vices; for it will, it already has made it the commonest, and let in all the Vices which follow this Excess upon the poorest of our People; who were formerly so far happy in their Poverty, that their Want secured them from many Vices to which their richer Neighbours were exposed.

How to advise charitable Persons to steer clear of these Inconveniences in their private Benefactions, I know not; perhaps it may be a good Rule in general not to be too

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## DISCOURSE .XI. 261

curious, or hard to be satisfied in these Cases.—But with Respect to the great Work of Charity, which has called us together this Day, I can with Pleasure observe to you, that it stands free of these Difficulties; it will appear so to do from the Nature of the Charity itself, and the Method in which it is conducted: and though neither the Persons who have undertaken this good Work desire to have their Praises set forth, nor is it my Intention to do it; yet, in Justice to the Work itself, give me Leave to mention very briefly some Circumstances attending it, that may recommend it to the Approbation of good People.

In the first Place then, the Persons admitted to partake in this Charity are real Objects, and from the Nature of the Thing they must be so: the Blind, the Lame, the diseased of various Kinds, resort hither for a Cure of their Evils. That such are proper Objects of Charity, there is no Doubt; but when Complaints of this Nature are used to move private Charity, they are often counterfeited; and the Money intended for the Relief of a poor Cripple, is perhaps given to a sturdy Vagabond. But that Case can never happen here; for Cheats and Counterfeits



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terseits never come to an Hospital to be cured; they never desire that their Complaints should be examined by the skilful Eye and Hand of the Surgeon. Whatever therefore may happen in other Cases, you may be sure to meet with no Frauds of this Kind in this Charity.

There are Distempers, indeed, which may be pretended, and in judging of which, even the skilful may be imposed on; but neither will such Frauds come here; for nobody will pretend such Diseases, merely for the Sake of going into a Course of Physic, and submitting to the Rules and Orders of a Place, which, though it affords ample Provision for the Wants of the Miserable, yet it affords no Temptation to the Idle and Vicious, that they should desire to come under the Rule and Discipline of it.

*Secondly*, Whatever is given in Support of this Institution, flows from the true and generous Principle of Charity, before described: all Persons are entitled to Relief here, if they really want it; and every Contributor is moved by the general Regard to the Good of Men, without any Regard to the little Partialities, which often influence our private Charities, whether we intend they should or

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## DISCOURSE XI. 263

no. But to subscribe to support an Hospital, open to all just Complaints, is a general Subscription for the Assistance and Comfort of Men in Misery and Distress, without any other Consideration whatever: and therefore this Charity has this excellent Ingredient in it, that it is *Love without Partiality*.

*Lastly*, There is one Inducement more, which is the good Management and Oeconomy shewn in the Application of this Charity. I have mentioned now a Thing worthy to be highly commended and extolled, but not by me in this Audience. I shall take Notice of it, therefore, only as a Fact, a Fact published by laying the Accounts of this Charity before the World, and in which every Man, who pleases, may at an easy Rate have full Satisfaction.

If this Consideration is, and surely it is a great Inducement to Benefactors to encourage this good Work; it is an Argument also to those who have employed their Time and their Pains in the Affairs of this House, to persevere in this Work of Love: their Charity is more, perhaps, than they imagine: others give whatever their Proportion amounts to; but these, by their good and wise Administration, encourage many to

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give; it is a Circumstance which they may reflect on with Comfort here, and it will surely have its Reward hereafter.

Go on therefore with Cheerfulness, in this great and good Employment; and in Confidence that you are serving a Master, who will not forget this your Work and Labour of Love.

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## DISCOURSE XII.

DEUT. xxxii. 45, 46.

*And Moses made an End of speaking all these Words to all Israel.*

*And he said unto them, Set your Hearts unto all the Words, which I testify among you this Day; which ye shall command your Children to observe, to do all the Words of this Law.*

**Y**OU have in the Text the last Piece of Advice which *Moses* gave to the People of *Israel*; for on the *self-same Day*, on which he made this Exhortation, he was summoned by God to depart from this World; accordingly he died on the Mountain of *Nebo*, and was gathered to his People.

The last Advice of dying Friends naturally



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rally makes a strong Impression on the Minds of those who survive them; and it is as natural for those who are leaving this World, to make the Thing, which they esteem to be of the greatest Consequence and Importance to their Friends, who are to stay behind them, the Subject-matter of their last Advice.

Consider now the Character of *Moses*; the many Years he spent in conducting the People of *Israel* from *Egypt* to the Land of Promise; the high Office he bore, by being appointed by God a Prophet and Lawgiver to his People: consider him, after a long Course of Teaching and Exhortation, giving his last Advice before he died; and you must needs think the Happiness of the People to be extremely concerned in the Matter recommended to them, by so great a Friend, by one of such Authority, and under such Circumstances.

The Advice is no less interesting than is to be expected: it aims at laying a solid Foundation of Happiness for that and all succeeding Generations; by instructing the People how to perpetuate to their Posterity the Knowledge of God and his Law, and to make him their constant Friend and Protector;

## DISCOURSE XII. 267

teetor ; namely, by instilling into the Minds of their Children, a Sense of the great Things which God had done for them and their Forefathers, and by forming them early to Obedience to the divine Law under which they lived :—*Ye shall command your Children to observe and do all the Words of this Law.*

The *Jews* had still a greater Reason to be careful and constant in discharging this Duty towards their Children ; they had not only the last Command of their great Law-giver for it, but they well knew that they were distinguished from the Rest of the World by Providence for the Sake of this Duty. Their great Ancestor *Abraham* was chosen to be the Head of a great Nation, that he might, and because God knew he would, be diligent to transmit to his Posterity the Knowledge of God's Laws, and to breed them up in Obedience to them. In the eighteenth Chapter of the Book of *Genesis*, God declares his Purpose of making *Abraham a great and mighty Nation* ; and that *all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed in him*. At the 19th Verse, the Reason of this peculiar Regard to *Abraham* is given ; *For I know him, that he will com-*  
*mand*

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*mand his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment.*

That the Command of *Moses* lays an Obligation on Parents, to make Use of their Authority with their Children to bring them into Subjection to the Law of God, is put out of all Doubt by the Language of the Text. They were to *command* their Children to observe and do all the Words of the Law. But this Precept had a larger and more extensive View, being given not merely as the Advice of a Preacher, but as the Injunction of a great Lawgiver prescribing a proper Method to establish and secure the Prosperity of a Nation. The Education therefore of the Children of a Country may, and ought, in all wise Governments, to be considered as a national Concern.

This Conclusion may appear, perhaps, with greater Force, as supported by the Declaration of God concerning *Abraham*, just before mentioned. God saw that *Abraham* would command his Children and Household after him, to keep the Way of the Lord, and to do Justice and Judgment; and therefore he determined to make him a great and mighty Nation. Now if this Disposition,

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position, seen and approved in *Abraham*, has no Relation to the Office of a public Magistrate, the Reason given for making *Abraham* Head of a great People, is a very strange one. For if the Magistrate has, and ought to have, no Concern in seeing the Youth of the Country brought up in the Fear of God, *Abraham's* Disposition to take this Care upon him could be no Reason for making him the Head of a great Nation.

To judge of the Methods which have been, or may be applied to propagate, or preserve Religion and the Fear of God in the World, we must consider the Nature, Capacities, and Circumstances of Men in general; the Influences under which they act; and which of them may be properly made Use of in the Case in Question. Religion being the Service of a free Agent, all external Force is excluded as absolutely improper: Instruction is the proper Application to a reasonable Mind; and were Men under no Influence but that of Reason, Instruction would be the *only proper* Application: but Men are born with Passions, as well as Reason, and the Passions grow strong and turbulent, much sooner than Reason



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Reason comes to such Maturity as to be able to correct and restrain them ; and therefore Authority is wanted as well as Instruction, to form the Mind of Men to Virtue and Religion.

I am sensible there are some, who have their Objections to this Method of propagating Religion, who think all Men should be left free to judge for themselves, without having the Prejudices of Education thrown into the Scale on either Side. They see that in Christian Countries, all are, through the Power of Education, Christians ; in Mahometan Countries, they are, for the same Reason, Mahometans ; and they think true Religion should reject the Use of those Means, which serve indifferently to promote Truth and Falsehood.

It is no uncommon Thing for Men to pursue their Speculations till they lose Sight of Nature ; the Consequence of which is, that they fall into Notions contradictory to the Experience of Mankind, and absolutely impossible to be reduced to practice.

Look into the History of Ages past, there is no Instance to be found of Children brought up free from the Impressions of Custom

## DISCOURSE XII. 271

Custom and Education; consider the Nature and Condition of Men, and it is impossible there ever should be.

Children have Eyes and Ears; what they see, they naturally imitate; what they hear, influences their tender Minds. And where Parents neglect the Care of their Children, they are left to Chance, and pick up Notions and Opinions from others; perhaps from the Footman, who oftentimes is constant Companion to the Heir of the Family. So that where Parents omit to instruct their Children, it is not leaving them to their own Freedom of Judgment, but it is leaving them to receive Impressions from far worse Hands.

But as this Objection, if there be any Weight in it, directly impeaches the natural Means ordained by Providence for preserving true Religion, and the Means enjoined as well under the Christian, as the Jewish Dispensation, for perpetuating the great Truths of Revelation, it may be proper, perhaps, to take this Matter a little higher, and consider how it stands on the Principles of Reason and human Nature.

Did Men come into this World perfect, and equally perfect, having their Minds  
stored

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stored with all necessary Ideas, and able to make a proper Use of all the Faculties of the Understanding, there might be some Reason, perhaps, in saying, "Leave themselves to judge for themselves." But as the Case is otherwise, and we bring little more into the World with us, than an animal Life, and arrive by slow Degrees to the Use of Reason and the Knowledge of Things about us, it is the Direction of Nature, in Consequence of this Course of Nature, that Parents should teach their Children, as they grow capable of learning, the Things that are necessary to their well-being.

The great Force of Custom and Education, whether rightly applied, or otherwise, could not be long unobserved in the World: as soon as it was observed, it became a strong Call upon the natural Affections of Parents, to guard the tender Minds of their Children against wrong Impressions, and to prevent the Growth of evil Habits in them. Without the Exercise of this Care in some Degree, Authority cannot be maintained on the Part of Parents, nor Duty required on the Part of Children. If Parents have nothing to teach, what have Children to obey? What then must become of the natural Duties

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Duties arising from this Relation, when nothing will remain, unless perhaps some Degree of Fondness, such as brute Creatures have by Instinct of Nature.

That this natural Force of Custom and Education was intended by Providence to act in Conjunction with Reason, for the Support of Virtue and Religion, there can be no Doubt; and whoever considers what God has done, by natural or supernatural Means, for the Sake of Religion, will see abundant Evidence for this Truth.

But, when the Ways of Men grew corrupt, when Custom and Education were gone over to the Side of Vice and Superstition, and Reason and Religion were left alone to struggle for themselves; it is hardly to be imagined how universally the Corruption spread, and how strong Possession was given to Idolatry and Superstition throughout the World. It may be hard to say, what induced Men at first to consecrate Birds and Beasts, Stocks and Stones, and to fall down and worship them. But when once those Follies were introduced, Custom and Education spread them far and wide; and they took such deep Root, that human Reason could not shake them, but was con-

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tent for Ages together to wear the Chains of blind Superstition. Custom and Education cannot be shut out of the Case; and Influence they must and will have; and if they are not secured on the Side of Reason, and taken in as Assistants to it, they will soon grow to be Tyrants over Reason; and Men will think and act as if they had none.

We read in ancient Story of a People, who used, when their Parents and Relations were grown old and infirm, to kill them and feast on them. The Custom appeared, as well it might, barbarous and inhuman in the Eyes of all civilized Nations: but those People being asked in their Turn, what they thought of those, who suffered their aged Parents to linger and die of themselves, and then burnt or buried their dead Bodies, they expressed the greatest Abhorrence for such Impiety. Had the *Egyptians*, or any other People, been examined in like Manner, upon any or all their Superstitions, their Sentiments in Favour of their national Customs would have been found as strong, and as hard to be rectified.

So general and so strong is the Force of Custom and Education, that the Influence may be said to be natural to the Mind of Man;

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## DISCOURSE XII. 275

Man; and if the Influence is natural, it was, doubtless, designed by the Author of Nature to be subservient to good Purposes. That he intended it for this Use, is manifest also from his making this Use of it, and from his interposing to correct the Abuses to which this natural Influence was but too liable through the Passions and Corruptions of Men.

Consider, from the Beginning of Things what Provision was made for propagating Religion in the World. *Adam* was created in the State of Manhood; and as he came a Man, and not a Child, out of the Hands of his Creator, he brought into the World with him all Knowledge necessary to a Man; of which the Knowledge of God and true Religion was the most necessary Part. Of him then sufficient Care was taken.

But all after him came Infants into the World, void of Knowledge, capable of coming at it but by slow Degrees, and liable to many Errors in the only Thing they had to depend on, the Use of their Reason. What Care now was taken to direct them right in this momentous Affair of Religion? Was it not plainly this, that they were put into the Hands of an In-

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structor, who was himself instructed by God, able to teach them the great Works of Providence in the Creation of all Things, and to point out to them the Duty owing from the Creature to the Creator?

How long this Influence continued to preserve a Sense of true Religion, we know not; probably in some tolerable Degree for many Ages; for many Ages passed before God, for the Wickedness of Men, destroyed the World by a Deluge.

Consider now again what Care was taken of Religion at the Restoration of the World after the Deluge; the Wicked with all their ungodly Deeds perished in the Waters; one distinguished *Preacher of Righteousness*, with his Family, was saved, to be the Father of a new World, and to teach the Ways of Righteousness to his Posterity.—And what was this, but uniting once more the Force of Reason, Education, and Custom in the Cause of Virtue and Holiness; and turning its natural Influence into its proper Channel, which had been divided and perverted by the Wickedness of Men?

After the Deluge, as the World grew populous, it grew corrupt again; and Idolatry overspread the Face of the Earth. God had promised

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## DISCOURSE XII. 277

promised never to destroy the Earth again for the Wickedness of the Inhabitants. But to check the Course of Impiety, and to keep up a Sense and Evidence of true Religion in the Midst of an idolatrous Generation, he thought fit in his Wisdom to raise up a Nation to be his own peculiar People. He made Choice of *Abraham* to be Head and Father of this Nation ; and we are at no Loss to account for the Reason of this Choice ; for God has told us with what View he elected *Abraham*—*I know him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment.*

When the Descendants from *Abraham* were grown numerous enough to make a People of themselves, God was pleased to give them a Law, introduced and confirmed by many signal Deliverances, and many Signs and Wonders ; and to perpetuate the Memory of them through all Generations, many Rites and Ceremonies were instituted, to be constant Parts of the national Religion ; which represented, and set before the Eyes of the People, the great Things which God had done for them ; such, for instance,



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was the Passover; such was that solemn Profession to be made at the offering of the first-Fruits, recorded in the Book of *Deuteronomy*. He who brought the Offering, was to speak and say before the Lord his God—

“ —A *Syrian* ready to perish was my  
“ Father, and he went down into *Egypt*,  
“ and sojourned there with a few, and be-  
“ came there a Nation, great, mighty, and  
“ populous.

“ And the *Egyptians* evil-intreated us,  
“ and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard  
“ Bondage.

“ And when we cried unto the Lord  
“ God of our Fathers, the Lord heard our  
“ Voice, and looked on our Afflictions, and  
“ our Labour, and our Oppression.

“ And the Lord brought us forth out of  
“ *Egypt*, with a mighty Hand, and with an  
“ out-stretched Arm, and with great Ter-  
“ rible-ness, and with Signs, and with  
“ Wonders.

“ And he hath brought us into this  
“ Place, and hath given us this Land, even  
“ a Land that floweth with Milk and  
“ Honey.

“ And

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“ And now behold I have brought the  
“ first Fruits of the Land, which thou, O  
“ Lord, hast given me.”

These Institutions, introduced at first by  
positive Law, soon obtained the Force of  
national Customs, and became a strong Bar-  
rier against the Superstition of the idolatrous  
Nations round *Judea*; and they were in-  
tended to answer this Purpose.

But it must be observed of these Institu-  
tions in general, that they were not intended  
to operate merely by the Force of Custom;  
but were adapted to preserve and renew the  
Memory of the true Reasons in which the  
Religion of the *Jews* was founded. If you  
had been to reason with a *Jew* upon the  
Obedience due to the Law of *Moses*, could  
you say more to him than what the Feast  
of the Passover taught him, and what the  
Profession made at the offering of the first  
Fruits contained? These Institutions there-  
fore intended to make Custom *subservient*  
to Reason and true Religion; and they were  
*so* constituted, that they could go no where  
*as Customs*, without carrying with them the  
true Reason of Religion.

Upon this Foot the *Jewish* Religion  
stood, till God thought fit by a new Reve-  
lation

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lation to call all the World to Repentance, and Obedience to the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

The Nations of the Earth were Idolaters before the coming of Christ; and their Religious Worship was not only directed to false Objects, but was in itself impure and corrupt, and tended to introduce great Depravity of Manners. The several Forms of Superstition in several Countries had Establishment, Education, and Custom, to support them; and these prescriptive Rights had got such strong Possession, that there was no Hope of seeing them beat out by human Wisdom. Some few perhaps saw the Follies which surrounded them; but their Wisdom was of no Use towards reforming the World, whatever it might be to themselves.

To root out this inveterate Evil required supernatural Assistance; and *yet such* Assistance as was consistent with the Freedom and Reason of human Minds, and agreeable to the Nature of Religion; which loses its very Being, when it is separated from Freedom and Reason.

The Power of Miracles was such an Assistance; for Miracles are an Appeal to Reason,



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Reason, as much as the Works of Nature are ; and therefore Miracles offered in Support of true Religion, are to be considered as new Arms put into the Hand of Reason, to enable it to subdue the Powers of corrupt Custom and Education.

My Subject does not lead me to consider all the Purposes which Providence had to serve by the Power of Miracles ; but this manifestly was one, though not the only one, to awaken the Attention of the World, to consider what they and their Fathers had been doing when they fell down before Stocks and Stones, and forgot the Lord who made them, and to whose command they saw all Nature was obedient.

When Reason and true Religion were by this powerful Assistance set free from the Shackles of Idolatry and Superstition, Miracles ceased ; and, for perpetuating the Knowledge of God and of his Truth in the World, the natural and ordinary Methods of teaching and instructing received an additional Strength under the Gospel, by setting apart an Order of Men, whose Business it should be to publish to every Generation the great Things which God had wrought for them through Christ Jesus.

This,



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This, I say, was an *additional* Strength to the ordinary and natural Means of Education, but was never designed to supersede it; for Parents are obliged by the Law of the Gospel, as well as by the Law of Nature, to breed up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; and where *this* Care is wanting, it is rarely that the *other* can take place; Children neglected naturally grow headstrong and self-willed; and we see, by sad Experience, that they are sent too late for Instruction to the Church, who were never inured to it at Home.

Laying then these Things together, consider, what is there in the present Circumstances of Things that we can do to promote Virtue and Religion in the World? We have only natural and ordinary Means within our Power. May we use them? or must the Care of Virtue and Religion be given up? If not, the properest, I had almost said, the only effectual Method to preserve them, is to lay a Foundation for the Youth of the Country.

But these general Reflections do so naturally arise from what has been said, that I will leave them to your own Thoughts; and

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and go on to consider the particular Case now before us.

The State of Religion in *Ireland* very well deserves the Attention of every Man in this Kingdom, who has a Concern either for the Purity of the Gospel, or for the Security of the Government under which we live.

The Reformation was very imperfectly carried on in *Ireland*; and the Bulk of the People have been ever since, and still are Papists. The Natives have a Language of their own, extremely hard to be learned or understood by any but themselves, which makes it almost impossible to convey any Light or Knowledge to them. The Priests among them, who talk their Language, being born and bred among them, know as little of any Thing else, as the People themselves do. So that Popery in *Ireland* is old traditionary Popery, without any of the Correction or Improvement which Popery in other Parts has been forced into by the Light of the Reformation. The Learned of the Church of *Rome* have been long palliating and refining their absurd Doctrines and Practices. Tell them that they worship Saints and Images, they will distinguish between

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tween direct Worship, and relative Worship, between religious Service, and Honour and Respect due to the Saints.—But the poor *Irish* worship Saints and Images, and have never heard even of these Refinements; which being invented as Answers to Objections, are of no Use among a poor People, secured by their Ignorance, and a Language understood by themselves only, from all Objections.

Not many Years ago a worthy Clergyman of *Ireland*, with great Pains and Labour, made himself Master of the Language of the Natives, with an Intent to preach the Gospel among them. He entered upon the Work, and the Success seemed to outrun his Wishes: his Audience was numerous, and the People seemed to be much affected with his Discourses: but as soon as this was perceived, the Priests had Orders to publish an Excommunication against every Person who should attend these Sermons: the Effect was, that the Preacher was entirely deserted.

The Case is much the same in some Parishes of the Kingdom, which have not a Protestant in them, except the Minister of the Parish; but few perhaps, who under-  
stand



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stand his Language, and they restrained by all the Terrors, which the Priests of *Rome* can infuse into poor ignorant People, from giving Ear to his Instructions. How uncomfortable a Situation must this be to an honest minded Clergyman, to find himself placed in an Office, with a great Trust annexed to it, and which it is morally impossible for him to discharge; what a Reproach is it to our Protestant Church in the Eyes of the Adversary, to have Shepherds appointed, and no Flocks to be attended; Rulers settled where there are none to be directed; Ministers without Congregations; Preachers without Hearers!

This great Evil ought to be removed, must be removed, as far as proper and reasonable Methods can prevail; and till *all* reasonable Methods are tried, the Reproach will remain with us unanswered.

Consider this State of Religion; and let every Christian lay his Hand to his Heart, and say, whether this Case calls for Help or no. Can we be blameless, if we look on, and see thousands perish for whom Christ died, without so much as offering to help or relieve them? These People, poor as they are, ignorant as they are, are yet  
Children



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Children of the same Father with us, Men of the same Nature, Fellow Subjects and Fellow Christians: if they know but little of Christ, by whose name they are called; if they live in Darkneſs and Superſtition, and in blind Obedience to popiſh Tyranny; they are but in the ſame Caſe in which our Forefathers were, and from which we are happily delivered. How ſtrongly do theſe Circumſtances plead their Cauſe! The Reverence we have for the common Father of all; the Benevolence due to our Fellow Creatures; the Love we owe to Men united to us in one and the ſame Society; Compaſſion to their unfortunate Caſe, which was once our own; Regard to the Name of Chriſt, by which they and we are called; do with one Voice exhort, incite, and provoke us to this Labour and Work of Love, in which their preſent and future Happineſs, the Glory of God, and the Honour of the Goſpel, are ſo nearly concerned.

There is another Conſideration well worth your Attention, which though it affords not ſo ſtrong a Reaſon as thoſe before mentioned, yet a ſtrong one it does afford, to encourage you to go on with the good Work you have undertaken; I mean the Proſperity

## DISCOURSE XII. 287

rity and Welfare of the Constitution and Government under which we live.

The present Government and the Protestant Religion must stand or fall together; Papists are by Principle Enemies to both; the more ignorant they are, the more determined and desperate Enemies they will be; as being free from the Restraints of Conscience and Reflection, to yield blind Obedience to their Directors.

The Papists in *Ireland*, by the lowest Computation I have seen, are five to two. The Civil and Military Government are in the Hands of Protestants, and in Times of public Tranquillity are sufficient to keep the Papists in due Obedience: but whenever the Public has been distressed by internal Com-motions, the Strength of Popery in *Ireland* has been fatally experienced. The Situation of Affairs in *Charles* the First's Time, brought them to take Arms; and the general Massacre of the Protestants is still fresh in Memory, in which thousands perished by Cruelties unknown even among barbarous Nations.

At the Revolution, the Popery of *Ireland* endangered the Protestantism of the three Kingdoms, by finding Employment for the  
Arms

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Arms of *England*, when they were wanted elsewhere to support the Cause of Liberty and Religion : and should we ever be so unhappy as to see our Religion and Liberty put again to the Chance of War, there can be no Doubt which Side the *Irish* Papists would take.

Even in the Times of Peace they are of little Use to the Public, being through Want of Education greatly unacquainted with the Arts of civil Life, and Strangers to the Improvements which make Men great and considerable. They may be fit for Arms, but they are not fit to be trusted in a Protestant Army : many of them indeed take to this Employment ; and they are a Seminary for foreign Troops ; a Strength bred up among ourselves, but always at the Service of our Enemies. So that when you compute their Numbers, and their Force, you must place their Strength to the Account, not of their natural Prince, the King of *Great Britain*, but rather to some foreign Powers, and to those especially, of whom *England* has the greatest Reason to be jealous.

What shall we say then to this State of the Case ? Shall these great Numbers continue



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tinue still to be our Enemies ; or shall we try to gain their Affections, and make them Friends as well as subject to the Government ? Shall we see them still sacrificing their Lives due to the Defence of their Country, in the Service of foreign Powers ; or shall we engage their Hearts and Hands in a nobler Warfare, in the Cause of Liberty ? Shall we permit them to remain untaught, uncultivated, useless to themselves and to the World ; or shall we shew them the Arts of Life and honest Industry, teach them to be happy, and of Service to themselves and to the Public ?

There can be no Doubt which Part is to be chosen. But as even the temporal Advantages proposed are not to be obtained but by setting these poor People free from the Tyranny of Popery, and by opening their Minds to see and receive the Truths of the Gospel ; the Methods to be used with them must be such as are consistent with the Nature of Religion, and such as the Circumstances of the People will admit.

—And such only have you made Choice of.

When you receive Children, whose Parents willingly entrust them to your Care, (and others you seek not after) you act by

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Commission under the paternal Authority, and are authoris'd by the same natural Right, when you teach and instruct such Children, as Parents themselves are when they teach and instruct their own. Whoever therefore has any Objection to the Work you are engaged in, must first dispute the Parent's Right to educate his own Children, before he can controvert yours.

If the Consent of Parents gives you a Right, your Charity, and Benevolence in undertaking a Duty, which the poor Parents are incapable of discharging themselves, will not fail to give you a Reward in due Time. Ages to come, when they feel the happy Change, the Foundation of which is now laying, shall bless your Memory; and thousands yet unborn may owe their Happiness in this World, and their Hopes in a better, to this Work and Labour of Love.

Go on then, and may Success wait on your Care. The Wishes of all, who wish well to their Country, are with you; and every good Man, if he has nothing else to give, will bestow his Prayers, that this Work of the Lord may prosper in your Hands.

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2 COR. ix. 12.

*For the Administration of this Service not only supplieth the Want of the Saints, but is abundant also by many Thanksgivings unto God.*

**T**O take in the full Sense of the Apostle upon this Subject, the 14th Verse ought to be read together with the Text; and then the Whole will run thus: *For the Administration of this Service not only supplieth the Want of the Saints, but is abundant also by many Thanksgivings unto God; and by their Prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding Grace of God in you.*

The Occasion of these Words was in short this: The Apostle had been making Collections among the Christians of several

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Countries, for the Relief of the poor distressed Brethren in *Judea*; and intending shortly to visit *Corinth*, he sends before him an Exhortation to them to be in Readiness to answer the Hopes and Expectations which themselves had raised in him, that he should receive a large Supply at their Hands. The Chapter of the Text is entirely spent in this Argument: the Apostle introduces it with excusing his Writing upon this Subject, since he knew how forward they were of their own Accord, and how much their Zeal had provoked and stirred up others to be liberal; but then from this very Circumstance he justifies his Application to them, and urges them in a very powerful Manner to make good their fair Promises, lest haply if they should after all be found unprepared at his Coming, both he and they should be *ashamed* in their *confident Boasting*. I should not have taken Notice of this Argument made use of by the Apostle to stir up the *Corinthians*' Charity, which is not indeed founded on the Nature of the good Work itself, or in the Promises of the Gospel, but for the Sake of observing to you, that it is not only lawful, but laudable, to make the natural Passions and

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Inclinations of Men subservient to the Cause of Virtue and Religion ; that it is no Way unbecoming a Preacher of the Gospel to apply to that Sense of Shame, to that Love of Credit and good Report, which God has implanted in Men, to be perpetual Incitements to Actions virtuous and praiseworthy. These Motives however must be kept in their proper Place ; we may recommend, but they cannot make a Duty ; the Ground of our Obedience lies deeper. The Honour of God, the Good of our Brethren, the Care of our own Happiness, are the Springs from whence all Duties flow ; and though we may consider these as distinct Heads, yet they always unite in one Stream, and run together without Division : for whilst we do good to others, we do Honour to God, and take the best Care of ourselves : and the Honour we have for God will as naturally shew forth itself in the Love of the Brotherhood, as it will certainly end in our own Happiness.

From these Principles the Apostle exhorts the *Corinthians* to set forward the Charity proposed to them with a liberal Hand, assuring them, that it would be abundant to the Honour and Glory of God,



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through many Thanksgivings; that it would supply the Wants of the Saints; and that it would return to them in Blessings, through the Prayers that would be offered to God in their Behalf.

We must not imagine that these Principles are peculiar to Works of Charity and Beneficence, for they really extend to all Parts of our Duty; all Religion is derived from them; and there is nothing we are bound to, but as it relates either to the Honour of God, or the Good of Mankind, or our own Welfare.

In treating therefore of this Subject, I shall consider,

*First*, How these Principles influence Religion in general.

*Secondly*, How plainly and evidently they lead us to Works of Charity and Mercy.

*Thirdly*, I will shew you how effectually they do conspire to recommend to us that good Work, for the promoting of which, we are this Day met together in the Presence of God.

*First* then; let us consider how these Principles influence Religion in general.

Man is a religious Creature, in Consequence of his being a rational one; our Obligations

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ligations to do right arise from the natural Powers with which we are endowed, to distinguish between Right and Wrong; and when in any Case, in which we are concerned to act, our Reason discovers to us what is Right, it at the same Time unavoidably fixes our Duty and Obligation.

It is but too plain, that to know and feel the Obligations we are under, is one Thing, and to comply with them in Practice, is another: all wilful Sinners feel the Obligations they are under to do right, and yet are carried by other Inducements, which have greater Force upon their Minds, to do wrong; and where Men comply with their Duty, it is not always, nay, it is perhaps but rarely, for the Sake of that natural Light of Reason only, which creates the Duty; but for other Reasons, which affect their own Interest and Convenience. And this shews the Difference between the Principles, and the mere Motives of Religion.

A rational Mind ought especially to be influenced by the Power of Reason; and if we could separate Men from the corrupt Passions and Affections which hang about them, the same Light of Reason which shews them their Duty, would sufficiently

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move and influence their Wills to Obedience; in which Case the Principles and the Motives of Religion would be exactly the same; and the Act of Obedience would be sincere and pure, and of the same Kind with the Light of Reason from which it flows. Such Obedience as this is in the highest Degree rational and religious; and though Laws, both human and divine, are guarded with Hopes and Fears, yet the Workings of such Hopes and Fears cannot add to the Religion of such Obedience; unless you suppose that there is more Religion in being moved by our own Passions, than in being conducted by the clear Light of our Reason and Understanding.

When once a Man has attained to the Knowledge of God, and of the Relation he bears to him, and feels the natural Obligations from thence arising to love, honour, and obey his Maker; though other Considerations may come in with good Effect to incline his Will to his Duty, yet no other Considerations can add to his Obligations, or make the Duty of Obedience more a Duty, or more an Act of true Religion, than it was before: for he who honours and obeys God, because he knows that God

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ought to be honoured and obeyed by him, his Creature and his Servant, acts upon as high and as true a Principle of Religion, as a rational Mind is capable of.

The *second* Principle of Duty, which is the Love of our Neighbour, may be considered in two Views, either as it results from the common Relation which all Men bear to God, or from the Relation which Men bear to each other: in the first View, to love our Neighbour is properly a religious Act, and Part of the Duty we owe to God; and he knows but little of God and his Attributes, who cannot from thence discern that to do good to our Fellow-Creatures is an acceptable Part of Obedience to him; that to vex, injure, and oppress them, is injurious to him, the common Father and Maker of all Men.

But besides this, could we suppose Men to forget God, without forgetting themselves, and losing the Reason with which they are endowed; the very Light of Reason, assisted by the natural Faculty of what is right and wrong, would oblige Men to use each other with Justice, and with Tenderness: for Reason itself is a Law to a reasonable Mind: and in the present Case,  
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you must either say, that it would be altogether as reasonable an Act in a Man, who believes not in God, to murder an innocent Child, as to nourish and support it; or you must allow that Reason alone in this Case makes a Difference, and creates such an Obligation as a reasonable Mind must ever be sensible of, and inclined to follow. I would not call this religious Obedience, but it is Obedience to the Law of our own Minds; and could we be so stupid as to forget the Hand which planted this Law in our Hearts, yet whilst the Law itself lives in us; that is, as long as we continue to have Reason and Sense, so long shall we feel the Obligations we are under in Obedience to it; so long shall we be dissatisfied with ourselves, for acting contrary to what we see, and know, and feel to be right and becoming.

But join these two Considerations together, and you see into the very Source of all the Obligations a Man can be under to do good to his Fellow Creatures. We can consider Men only as they stand related to us, or as they and we stand equally related to God, our common Father; and under these Views we may discover whatever we

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owe to Man for his own Sake, or for the Sake of God who made him; and discern the whole Compass of our Duty with Respect to the *second* great Branch of it, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

Let us then proceed to the *third* Thing, *viz.* the Love of ourselves, and our own Happiness; and consider how far this will and ought to influence our religious Obedience.

It is very evident from the common and universal Sense of Mankind, that the Desires of Life and Happiness are Impressions which come from the Author of Nature; and consequently that to follow these Impressions, and to act in Pursuance of them, is according to Nature, and agreeable to the Will of God, the Author of them. It is reasonable for a Man to be concerned for his own Happiness; and since the Will of God can never contradict right Reason, it is consonant to the divine Will for Men to act upon this Principle, the Care of themselves and of their own Welfare. This Concern for our own Happiness is a very strong Principle of Action in us, and when duly pursued, within its proper Bounds, a very justifiable one; and though in Strictness of  
Speech

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Speech it cannot be termed a Principle of Religion, because the Reason of our own religious Obedience is not to be resolved into Self-love; yet considering the strict Union which God has made between our Happiness and our Duty, the Concern for our own Happiness, when duly regulated, will always be a powerful Principle of Action in Matters of Religion.

The natural Care and Concern therefore which all Men have for themselves and their own Happiness, is the great Source from which the Motives of Religion are deduced: and the Reason why this natural Principle of Action does often furnish very powerful Motives to the Cause of Vice and Irreligion, is no other than this; that Men often, through the Corruption of their Affections, judge amiss of their Happiness, and pursue those Things as pleasant and profitable, which are really pernicious and destructive. In which Case Men are not to be blamed for pursuing their own Happiness, but for the Corruption of their Hearts, which makes them place their Happiness in the Things the most contrary to it. For since God made Man to be happy, and has endowed him with Reason, to discern wherein



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wherein his true Happiness does consist, it must needs be agreeable to the Will of God, that Man should endeavour to attain that Happiness, for which he was intended. The Consequence of which is, that it is no Blemish to our Obedience, that we are moved by the Considerations of that Happiness, which God has made to be the Reward of it.

To judge rightly therefore of the Motives upon which Men act in their religious Concerns, we must judge of the Nature of the Happiness they propose to themselves; and this, I think, we may admit as a Rule in this Case; that as long as Men seek after that Happiness which is natural and proper, and intended for them by God, so long they act upon Motives agreeable to the Will of God.

The Happiness in which Men are capable of having any Share, or for which they have any Desires, is either that which belongs to this World, or that which belongs to the World to come. That future Rewards are proper Incitements to Virtue and Religion, is plain from hence; that God has proposed them as such, and sent his only and well beloved Son into the World, to bring *Life and Immortality to Light through*



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*through the Gospel.* But these future Rewards do not alter the Nature of Religion, or give God a better Title to our Obedience than he had before; they contain not the Reasons and Evidences of the Obligations we were under to the Supreme Creator, but they are added as proper Movements to the Will and Affections of Men, and to raise their Minds above the Temptations of this World, which so easily beset them. The particular Rewards promised in the Gospel being Matter of divine Revelation, to reject them, is Want of Faith; to admit them, is an Act of Religion towards God, with respect to that Faith, which is the Foundation of our receiving them; but with respect to the Influence of the Rewards themselves, they do not make any Thing to be a religious Duty, which is not so in itself; they do not make any Thing cease to be Religion, which was Religion before.

As to the Happiness of this present Life, we can, I think, as little question whether God intended Men to be happy here, as we can, whether he intends them to be happy hereafter: the natural Desires of Men after this Happiness, the necessary Connection between Virtue and Happiness, and the

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Goodness of God towards his Creatures, will not permit us to make any Doubt of it: and if God intended Men for Happiness here, to pursue this Happiness by the most justifiable Means, *i. e.* by the Means of Virtue and Religion, must needs be agreeable to his holy Will; and consequently the Prospect of the Peace and Tranquillity of this Life, is a proper Motive to Religion.

Under the old Law we find the Promises of this Life were expressly made to religious Obedience by God himself; a Demonstration, I think, that the *Motives of this World* are not in their own Nature destructive of *religious* Obedience. Long Life, temporal Peace and Prosperity in the flourishing Condition of their Country, fruitful Seasons, and plentiful Harvests, are Inducements always proposed to the *Jews* to keep the Commandments: nor may we pretend to say, that these Promises were peculiar, and only proper to the *Jews*, unless we think that it was peculiar to the *Jews* to desire long Life, Prosperity, and Plenty: for Motives founded in natural Desires must be as extensive as the Desires themselves; and having been propounded by God as Motives of Religion to one Nation, it shews they are proper

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proper for all. The *Jews* had indeed an exprefs Promise of temporal Felicity, if they continued obedient: other Nations, if they believe God to be the Governor of the World, must have Assurance of the like Reward; for to suppose God to govern the World, infers his Care of a religious obedient People: and therefore our Saviour gives it as an Instance of Want of Faith, where Men distrust the Goodness of God in providing for them, whilst they endeavour to serve him. But further; even under the Gospel we are assured, that *Godliness has the Promises of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

To encourage ourselves therefore in our Duty and Obedience, with the Hopes that God will reward us here with Life, Health, and Prosperity, is no Blemish to our Religion; but indeed is an Act of Faith in God, as Governor of the World; and a proper Inducement to make us, in all we say or do, to look up to him who is the Giver of every good and perfect Gift, both in this Life and in the next.

Our Saviour reckons but two general Heads of Religion, the *Love of God*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*; but the second  
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of these plainly infers another, the Love of ourselves; for since we are to love our Neighbour as ourselves, it is evident that we may and ought to love ourselves. A corrupt and irreligious Affection can be no Rule of Duty; and if we are bound to love others according to the Measure of the Love we have for ourselves, it is evident at least that we *may*, consistently with the Nature of Religion, love ourselves as much as we are *bound* to love others: and since it is our Duty to promote the present Ease, and Happiness, and Prosperity of our Neighbours, it must be agreeable to the Mind of our blessed Saviour, that we should take the same Care of ourselves: and if this be a lawful Care, it must needs be allowed, that it is never better employed than when it makes us obedient towards God, in Hopes of his Favour and Protection.

Having now, if not too largely, yet at least as far as the present Occasion will give Leave, endeavoured to clear the *first* Thing proposed; I shall proceed to the *second*; namely,

How plainly and evidently these Principles lead us to Works of Charity and Mercy.

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*He that oppresseth the Poor, says the wise King of Israel, reproacheth his Maker : but he that honoureth him, hath Mercy on the Poor.*

The Poor are the Creatures of God, not only as they are Men, but also as they are poor Men: the different Orders and Degrees of Men are from the Hand of God; and to despise or oppress a Man for being what God has thought fit to make him, is to reproach God: and if we have a true Honour for God, the common Father of both Rich and Poor, it will dispose us to regard even the meanest of his Children. The Rich are the elder Brothers of the World; and as they share the Estate of it among them, so is it incumbent on them to provide for the Necessities of the Rest of the Family; which they can hardly neglect without renouncing the common Relation they have to one and the same Parent; so that to shew Mercy to the Poor, is a direct Way of paying Honour to God.

Besides, Works of Mercy redound to the Honour of God, through the Praises and Thanksgivings of those, who feel the Comfort and Relief of them. The Charity of the Rich, thrown into the Lap of the Poor, ascends

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ascends up in more delightful Steams than the Incense of the Altar, and returns again in Showers of Blessings upon the Head of the Liberal. The unexpected Relief which the Indigent meet with, naturally creates in them a great Sense of Providence, and of the Care of God over his Creatures; it raises them to a thankful Acknowledgment of his Regard towards them, and disposes them to a religious Dependance on him in the Midst of all their Distress. So that in this Sense also Works of Charity tend to the Honour of God, as they promote a true Sense of Religion in the World.

That the Good and Welfare of Men are directly consulted by the charitable Hand, is too plain a Case to admit of any Proof: and great Pity it is, that there is any Room to doubt whether this End be always attained by the Liberality of well-disposed Persons: but so it is, that too great a Part of what is given in Charity in this rich and populous City, instead of being a Supply to the Want of Saints, is the Nourishment of idle and debauched Vagabonds: a Case the more to be lamented, because the frequent Impostures of this Kind make good People distrustful of all who ask for Charity,

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and sometimes bring great Difficulties upon the well-deserving Poor. Under these Circumstances, we can no otherwise answer this End of Charity, the doing good to others, than by taking some Care to place our Charity right; and to distinguish between the truly Needy, and the idle Beggar, who lies in wait to intercept Charity, and to divert the Maintenance of the more deserving. But however we may be imposed on in this Respect, yet in that which follows, I trust there is no Fear of being deceived; for though the wicked Receiver of Charity shall answer for his Guile and Hypocrisy, yet the Liberality of the Giver shall not go unrewarded: for,

*Thirdly*, By Works of Mercy and Charity, we make the best Provision for our own present and future Happiness. This may be concluded by direct Inference from what has been already said; for since Works of Mercy have so plain a Tendency to promote the Honour of God, we cannot doubt but that God will reward the Love and Obedience of such as take Pleasure therein. Add to this, the express Promises of the Gospel made to these good Works especially; insomuch that clothing the Naked, feeding



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feeding the Hungry, giving Drink to the Thirsty, visiting the Sick and the Prisoners in their Distress, are mentioned by our blessed Saviour, as chief Articles of Enquiry at the last great Day; and are put into the short Description which St. *James* has left us of *pure and undefiled Religion in the Sight of God*; add to this, I say, and we have all the Security that can be desired or expected.

The final Retribution for this, and every other Work, must be expected from the Justice of God, in that Day in which he hath appointed to judge the World; but this hinders not but that we may justly hope for Part of our Reward in this Life. In the Chapter of the Text, the Apostle encourages the *Corinthians* to Liberality, by teaching them to expect a Return for it from God, in the Increase of their Stores, and a plentiful Harvest of the good Fruits of the Earth: this Reward he earnestly prays they may have:—*He that ministereth Seed to the Sower, both minister Bread for your Food, and multiply your Seed sown.* The Apostle wrote to Christians, and doubtless he made use of none but *Christian Motives*; and upon his Authority we may venture to



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promise to the charitable Christian a suitable Reward, as well in the Blessings of this Life, as of that which is to come. But it is Time to proceed to the last Thing proposed :

To shew how effectually these Considerations conspire to recommend to us that good Work, for promoting of which, we are this Day met together in the Fear of God.

If to supply the temporal Wants of the Brethren, be a work redounding to the Honour of God; behold these numerous Objects before you, all wearing the Livery of Charity, not as a Badge of Servitude to any earthly Master, but as a Token that they and their Benefactors are equally Servants to God: nor are their present Wants and Necessities the only Concern of this pious Institution; but a Foundation is laid for the constant Support of them and their Families, by training them up, and disposing of them to such useful Employments as may yield them a comfortable Maintenance for their Lives; so that this Charity, like the *Widow's Cruse*, will always recruit itself; and Bread to be earned by these many Hands, in Time to come, shall be placed to the

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the liberal Man's Account, as the Growth and Product of his Beneficence, and be a Memorial of his good Works daily renewed and offered up in the Sight of God.

But the supplying the temporal Wants of the Poor is not the only, nor the chief End of these Institutions; they have another View, which more directly regards the Honour and Glory of God; the instructing of Youth in the Principles of Virtue and Religion, and teaching them to know God betimes, and the Obedience owing to him. And if providing for the temporal Wants of the Poor shall be esteemed an Honour paid to God, how much more shall this Charity be so esteemed, which is dedicated expressly to that End? the chief Business of which is, to fill the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings with the Praises of God, a Sacrifice which he will not despise. To instruct undisciplined Youth in the Principles of Faith and Obedience, what is it but to extend the Dominion of God over his Creatures; to *turn the Hearts of the Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just*, and to *make ready a People prepared for the Lord*; to conquer the Powers of Darkneſs, like good Soldiers of Chriſt; and to lay up in Store for our-

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selves more than the Conqueror's Crown.  
But, *secondly*,

The Argument has the same Advantage with Respect to the *Good* of those who are the immediate Objects of this Charity: it has this in common with other Charities, that it is a Supply for the Wants of the Poor; it has this above many others, that it is a Provision against future Wants; but its chief Glory is, that it is a Provision not only for the present Comforts of this Life, but also for the Happiness of that Life which is eternal; by rescuing the Poor from that Contagion of Vice to which they are so fatally exposed, for Want of due Instructions in their Youth: it is this Want which has filled the Streets with idle Vagabonds and Beggars; many of whom know nothing of *the Lord who bought them*, except only his Name; nor had they known that, but merely for the Use of it in the common Forms of Begging. Lastly,

As to yourselves, the Encouragers, the Supporters of this good Work, God is your Reward: and as the Charity you are engaged in, has all the Marks of a just Regard to the Honour of God, and of a tender and Christian Concern for the present and future

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### DISCOURSE XIII. 313

Happiness of your Brethren ; so need you not doubt, but that the Promises of the Gospel shall be justified unto you, both in this Life, and in that which is to come. Go on therefore, and faint not ; if your Work be attended with Difficulties, they shall serve only to increase your Reward. Let it be the Care on your Part, *That your Good be not evil spoken of* ; and if Offences come, (and they must needs come) *wo to them by whom they come.*

But that this Charity may in all Respects be above Reproach, and answer the Ends proposed by the liberal Benefactors, I earnestly recommend it to those who have the immediate Care of these Children, to be watchful over their Behaviour, and constant and diligent in the Discharge of their own Duty. The Success of this Charity depends in great Measure upon their Fidelity : Men of Fortune and Business in the World cannot attend so closely as to observe every Thing that passes ; this Care therefore must rest upon those, who have more immediately the Inspection of these Schools. And let them remember, that they receive the Pay of Charity ; and that they cannot neglect their Duty, without adding this Aggravation



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gravation to their Crime, the Abuse of one of the noblest Charities of this Age..

And now, may that God, whose Honour you are labouring to promote, whose Children these are, who are supported and instructed by your Charity, prosper this Work in your Hands; and raise up fresh Supplies for the Administration of this Service: may he minister Bread for your Food, and multiply your Seed sown, and increase the Fruits of your Righteousness. *To him, &c.*

GRAVATION

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## DISCOURSE XIV.

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JUDGES ii. 7.

*And the People served the Lord all the Days of Joshua, and all the Days of the Elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great Works of the Lord, that he did for Israel.*

**T**HUS far all is well: God had been extremely gracious and merciful to Israel; and those who had seen his Wonders, and had felt the Miseries from which he had delivered them, retained a grateful Remembrance of his Goodness. But the Case quickly altered: no sooner were the Men, who had seen the Works of the Lord, gathered unto their Fathers, but there arose another Generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the Works which he had done for Israel: and the Children of Israel

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*rael did Evil in the Sight of the Lord. The Effects of their departing from God their Deliverer, are described at the 14th Verse. And the Anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the Hands of the Spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the Hands of their Enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their Enemies.*

You have now the Case of the *Israelites* fully before you. I wish it was a singular Case, and that the Rest of the People of God stood clear from the like Imputation. If they do, happy are they; if they do not, they have great Reason to fear, that the same Cause will produce the same Effect; and that they likewise shall be sold into the Hands of their Enemies.

It is but a melancholy Reflection to think, that the Misbehaviour here charged upon the People of *Israel*, is almost a natural Effect of the present degenerate and corrupted State of Nature: we receive Benefits with great Warmth and Zeal of Gratitude, and we possess and enjoy them with great Coldness and Indifference; and too often with a total Forgetfulness of the Hand that bestowed them. This Temper discovers itself in the  
common

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common Affairs of Life, and the mutual Intercourse that Men have with Men. Those, who are able to help us, are courted and caressed as long as we want their Assistance; are honoured and revered whilst they afford it; and as soon as they have made us happy, we begin to think they did us but Justice, they gave us only what we had a Right to; and the Acknowledgments due to the Benefactor are paid to our own Merit and Desert. By these Steps our Success in the World, owing perhaps entirely to the Partiality our Friends had for us, and which ought to make us humble and thankful, leads us to two odious Vices, very incident to human Nature, though very unbecoming the Condition of it, Pride and Ingratitude.

Public Blessings make still less Impression on the Minds of Men, than private Benefactions. Very few think of any Obligation lying upon themselves, for the Good they enjoy in common with their Neighbours. The Peace and quiet Security procured by the Care and Protection of Government, is rarely reflected on as creating any Debt of Gratitude to those who watch for us. When Tribute is demanded by those to whom Tribute is due, Men are apt to consider what they



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they pay, as so much lost out of their Property: whereas in Truth no Part of our Fortune makes a better Return to us, than that which is bestowed to secure the whole, and to maintain Peace and Tranquillity in our Days.

What Mischief this Temper of Ingratitude produces in private and in public Life, is but too manifest. Every Man almost has his Complaint against somebody, who has repaid his good Offices with Neglect and Contempt, perhaps too with Injuries; and in public Life one would imagine that Liberty was mistaken for a Right to abuse the Government; and that the Dignity of a free State consisted in acting without Regard or Reverence to those who are at the Head of it.

But the Effects of this perverse Disposition acting in the Affairs of this Life, and among ourselves, are Matters of light Complaint, compared with its Influence in Matters of Religion. We have all one great *Friend*, if we would acknowledge him, one great *Governor*, if we would regard him. But we are too apt to deal with God, as we do with the Rest of our *Friends*; we intreat, we beg for his Assistance, when we are in Distress; and

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and when we are relieved, we think but little of him.

The common Blessings of Providence are received and enjoyed by Multitudes, who seldom or never think of the Hand that supplies their Wants. The former and the latter Rain, and the plentiful Seasons are ascribed to I know not what Course of natural Causes; but such Causes are meant, to which no Thanks are due; and this Notion, contrary to Reason and true Philosophy, is the more readily embraced, because it furnishes Men with the good Things of the World, and lays them under no Obligations to the Author of them. *St. Paul* says, that God at no Time *left himself without Witness, in that he did good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness.* But how has this Evidence been attended to? The constant and regular Supply of our Necessities makes us imagine that we have a Right to them by Prescription, and that we have a Property in them as *Children of the Earth*: or, that if any Thing is owing to Wisdom, it is to *our own* Wisdom, in managing the *Ground* and the *Seasons* to the best Advantage. And thus forgetting the Author of every

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every good Gift, and transferring the Honour due to him, to ourselves, we do, in the Language of the Prophet, *Sacrifice unto our Net, and burn Incense to our Drag, because by them our Portion is fat, and our Meat plentiful*, Hab. i. 16.

But however these common Blessings, which come to all without Distinction, are neglected and overlooked, one would imagine that signal Deliverances wrought in Favour of any People, and in which the Arm of the LORD is made bare, and visible to every Eye, should be had in perpetual Remembrance, and be transmitted with Sentiments of *Gratitude, Honour, and Religion* to the latest Posterity.

But the Case is far otherwise!

The History of the *Jews*, a People under the peculiar and visible Government of Providence, is a Series of Rebellions and Revolts against GOD, who had frequently and miraculously delivered them from the Hands of their Enemies. In their Story the Counsels of GOD with Respect to them and their Neighbours are laid open; and we see plainly the Resentment of GOD's Justice against a rebellious People, and in what Manner he raised the Nations round about them, to punish



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nish and distress them. From their Example we may learn to reckon with ourselves; and, by considering our own Case, know what to fear, and what to hope, from the Justice and Mercy of GOD: for the Ways of Providence are unalterable, and the same Wisdom and Justice which governed the *Jews*, governs all the People of the World. The Purposes of GOD are the same towards all Nations, though not so discernible and manifest as in the History of the People of *Israel*. Profane History presents us many Instances of Nations subdued under the Hand of their Enemies, and fallen from a State of Pride and Sovereignty to the miserable Condition of *Slavery* and *Captivity*. There the History leaves us.—It acquaints us with the Facts, and the Politicians of the World are busied in assigning Causes for the surprising Changes that have been in the Nations. Some discern great Wisdom and Conduct on the Side of the Conquerors, and great Mistakes and ill Management on the Side of the Unfortunate; and all agree to ascribe in most Cases, the Events and Successes of War to the Number and Bravery of the Troops. But look into the *Sacred History*, where the Counsels of GOD are displayed

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played by his holy Prophets, there will you see a plain Reason, why the favourite Nation, delivered most wonderfully and miraculously from the Slavery of *Egypt*, was sold again into Slavery to the *Philistines*, and other heathen *Nations* around them. Had this Story been told in the common Way of History, we should have thought this People extremely weak or unfortunate, in that they had no sooner escaped out of the Hands of the great and powerful *Kings* of *Egypt*, but they became *Vassals* and *Bondsmen* to the little *Princes* bordering upon *Canaan*. But see the Truth of the Case: they became extremely unfortunate, because they were extremely wicked; their Prosperity was their Ruin, as it made them forget the LORD that bought them. And the Strength, which they relied on as their Security, betrayed them to their Destruction; for they had to deal with Him, *who saveth not Kings by the Multitude of an Host, nor giveth the Battle to the Strong*.

Let no Man be so weak as to imagine that this Method of Providence was peculiar and confined to the *Jews*, and that other Nations were left to follow their own Imaginations, and that GOD regarded them not; for

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for the contrary appears in the same *sacred History*, in which we have the Account of the *Jewish Nation*. The Counsels of God were not indeed so manifestly declared to other *Nations* by *Prophets* and *Messengers* from God; but the Methods of Justice were the same to all, and the *Nations* were left to Reason and Conscience, those great Lights given to all alike, to interpret the Conduct of Providence with Respect to themselves. Were *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* destroyed by Chance? No: it was by a Fire from Heaven, commissioned to extirpate a wicked and profane People. Were the *Canaanites* overpowered by the Arms of *Israel*? Certainly not: but God, who had waited in Patience and Forbearance till the Measure of their Iniquity was full, delivered them up to Destruction. Enquire what became of the great Monarchies of *Affyria*, *Babylon*, and *Egypt*: you may see their Doom foretold by the Prophets. They were to be destroyed for their great *Idolatry* and *Corruption*: and the Prophecies have been so remarkably fulfilled, that they are a standing Lesson of Instruction to all *Nations*, who have Eyes to see, and Hearts to understand. Thus too it fared at last with the favourite People of

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the *Jews*: they were often punished in Mercy, and suffered to be miserable, that they might become better. They were from Time to Time admonished by the Prophets; and at last God sent his *Son* to them; Him they slew and hanged on a Tree; and having filled up the Measure of their Iniquity, Vengeance pursued them; and such Vengeance as astonished the World, and does yet astonish it; for *there is no Misery, like their Misery*.

Final Punishments, whereby *Nations* are entirely rooted out, are of Use to us as Examples and Warnings to flee from the Wrath to come; otherwise they can do us no Service: for should we ever fall into so wretched a Condition as to call down such Judgments on our Head, who can deliver us from the Hand of the living God? But other Judgments, how sharp and severe soever they may be, are the Effects of Mercy, and intended for our Correction.—When ancient and late Deliverances are forgotten, and have no Effect upon the Mind; when the Voice of God speaking in his Law, by his Prophets, and by the Ministers of his Word, is no longer attended to; nothing remains but to apply sharper Remedies, or to permit the



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the People to fill up the full Measure of their Iniquities, and to perish in their Sins.

—It is Mercy to prevent *this fatal* Evil, how corroding soever the Means, made Use of by Mercy, may prove. The Perverseness and Corruption of Men's Hearts justify the Goodness and Equity of God in inflicting such Punishments, and they must blame themselves for not attending to the gentler and the kinder Calls of Providence.

Perhaps there may be no great Occasion to justify before you the Ways of God towards the Children of *Israel*; we are all of one Opinion to condemn their Perverseness and Ingratitude: so much easier is it, to detect the Faults of others, than to see and acknowledge our own!

But are we innocent from this great Offence?

Let us consider our own Case: and surely we have great Reason to consider it, now the Enemies of our *Religion* and *Liberty* appear with Triumph in our Land, and are in Possession of one antient and powerful *Kingdom* united to the *Crown of England*.

Our unhappy Divisions in *civil Matters* I choose to pass over in Silence at this Time and Place; for I mean no Reproach to



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any Man. And without doubt our Conduct towards God, and our Regard to his *holy Religion*, is the first and most interesting Consideration now before us.

It is well known that the People of *Israel* were the chosen, the peculiar People of God; and distinguished from the Rest of the *Nations*, by a special Providence directing them and their Affairs. If you consider this as the Effect of Partiality, and a weak Fondness for one Set of Men more than another, you injure the *Attributes* of God, who acts by *Wisdom* and *Justice* in all his Dealings, and is no Respector of Persons. The House of *Abraham* was called for the Sake of true *Religion*; to preserve the Knowledge of the one God among themselves, to propagate it among the *Nations*, and to prepare the Way for introducing into the World, under proper Circumstances, that *Seed*, in which all the *Nations* of the Earth were to be blessed. As they were chosen for these great Purposes, so whenever they acted contrary to them, they ceased to be the chosen People, and were treated as Enemies and Rebels.

We are apt enough to boast of the Purity of our *Religion*, and our *Reformation* from the Errors and Corruptions of the *Church*

of

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*of Rome*; and to flatter ourselves that we also are a peculiar People of God, and set up by Providence to be the *Bulwark* of the *Protestant Religion*. And indeed, if we judge from the many Deliverances we have had, when our *Religion* and our *Liberties* were in utmost Danger, we have great Reason to acknowledge the Care and Protection of Heaven over us. But remember still that we too are chosen to profess and maintain the Truth of God's holy *Gospel*, and to bear our Testimony against the Corruptions, which have prevailed over a great Part of the *Christian World*. If, instead of acting up to this Part assigned us by Providence, we grow careless and indifferent to our holy *Profession*, and suffer a Spirit of Irreligion to prevail over the Nation, we forfeit our Title to God's Protection; we are no longer the chosen People, and must expect to be treated as Enemies and Deserters.

Our *present* Situation is attended with Fears and uneasy Apprehensions; and if we look back and consider from whence we are fallen, we may see but too much Reason to suspect that our Fears are well grounded. How has this Nation been blessed with the Light of the Gospel! How wonderfully

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and how often has it been rescued from Danger, when to human Appearance there was no Help at Hand ! Scarcely had the *Reformation* taken Root among us, but a *Papish Queen*, made cruel by *Bigotry* and *Superstition*, ascended the *Throne* ; and applied the *only strong Argument* of *Popery*, Fire and Faggot, to extinguish the Light that was breaking in upon us. Not only the *civil Powers* of this Country were in the Hands that meant to destroy the *Reformation*, but they were supported and united to the Powers of *Spain*, whose *Prince* was become a Partner of the *Throne* of *England* ; who lived to destroy (not in this Country, blessed be God, but in his own Dominions) *Thousands* and *Tens of Thousands* on Account of *Religion*.—Such were the Powers under which the *Reformation* here, still in its *Infancy*, was to struggle. It is painful to think of the *Miseries* of that Time ; but think of them we ought, and bless God for the noble *Examples* of *Constancy* and *Christian Courage*, left by those whom he raised up to bear Testimony, at the Expence of their Lives, to the Truth of his *Religion*. Had this Reign been long and prosperous, it is highly probable that *Philip* of *Spain* had left this  
Country



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Country in the same Condition he left his own; where the *Inquisition* rules with lordly and uncontrollable Power over the Consciences and over the Fortunes of the People. But God, in whose Hands are the Issues of Life and Death, made Way for a *Protestant Princess* to ascend the *Throne*; in whose long and glorious Reign the *Reformation* took deep Root, and the *Establishment* of this *national Church* was perfected. A Work of great *Wisdom* and *Piety*, and so esteemed by the *Protestant Churches* abroad, however unhappily some among ourselves have forsaken her *Communion*.

The *Reign* of this glorious Princess was almost a continual *Scene* of Deliverances from foreign *Invasions*, and *Disturbances* at home. And notwithstanding she was distressed on every Side, by *Bulls* and *Curses* from *Rome*, by *Armadas* from *Spain*, by *Rebellions* in *England* and *Ireland*, she left this *Church* and *Nation* in Peace and Security: so wonderfully did the Hand of God appear in our Preservation.

Peace and Security under a weak Government which succeeded, produced by Degrees a Corruption in Principles and Manners, which ended at last in the Ruin of  
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this Church and Nation, and the Destruction of a virtuous Prince worthy of a far better Fate. With him fell all our Hopes of *Order* and *Government* in *Church* and *State*; Anarchy and Confusion usurped the Throne; and Religion was so divided into an almost infinite Number of disagreeing SECTS, that the true one could hardly be found in the Crowd.

But whilst we are under this thick *Cloud*, HE, who can bring Light out of Darknes, did, against all the Hopes of human Probability, restore us to our happy Constitution in *Church* and *State*; not by Force of *Arms*, or the Power of Princes, but by over-ruling the Passions of Men; so that even *they* became Instruments in restoring these *Blessings*, who had been greatly concerned in destroying them.

It will be wronging the Nation to say that this Deliverance at the Restoration was not received with great Joy and Pleasure. The Joy indeed was excessive; and, as the Case too often happens, left little Room for sober and serious Reflections. The Hearts of Men being set open to the Impressions and Transports of Joy, soon grew sensual; and the Prosperity of the Nation broke out  
into

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into *Luxury*, and into all the Vices which naturally attend it. The Senses of Religion decayed; and the very Appearances of it were suspected, as a Remnant of the Hypocrisy with which the late Times had been charged. And if we may judge by the Performances of the *Stage*, which are formed to the Taste of the People, there never was a Time when Lewdness, Irreligion, and Profaneness were heard with more Patience.

But let us consider, what Fruit the Nation had of these Things. I shall pass over all the Calamities of that Time, which were many, and mention only that, which is the Cause and Foundation of all we fear at present. In the next Reign then, see Popery once more exalted to the *Throne of England*, and working to destroy the Religion and Liberties of the People; not by Art and Cunning and leisurely Steps, but by open and avowed Attempts upon our Constitution. The Laws for Defence of our Religion were silenced by a dispensing Power; *Papists* were placed on the *Bench*, on the *Seat of Judgment*, and at the Head of *Colleges* in our *Universities*. Men's Hearts sunk for Fear, and the Torrent seemed to carry all before it. One happy Effect indeed it had; it awakened

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awakened Men to a sober Sense of themselves and their Condition. When they were *put in Fear*, they soon found *themselves to be but Men*; and they did the only reasonable Thing they could do, apply to God for Protection. The Zeal of the Nation at that Time, for the pure uncorrupted *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*, in Opposition to the Errors of Popery, was perhaps greater than ever it had been from the Days of the *Reformation*. The Pastors and their Flocks were equally animated with a Constancy and a Courage above Temptation. And the *Clergy* of the *Established Church*, under all the Fears and Apprehensions that daily threatened them, maintained the *Doctrines* of the *Reformation*, with such Learning, Ability, and Integrity, as did them Honour both at home and abroad.

Thus were the Hearts of the People turned as the Heart of one Man: nor was it in vain they sought the *Lord*; for, by a wonderful Series of Providence, he delivered them from their Distress. And we have seen for many Years the *Crown* upon the Head of Protestant Princes, the natural Guardians of the Religion and Liberties of this Country.

If



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If we have made right Use of this last Deliverance, let us fear no *Change*; for God will not forsake us, till we forsake him. But the Prospect before us, the Danger that draws near to us, call upon us to act uprightly with ourselves; and not to deceive our Hearts with Hopes that God will remember us, if we have forgot him, and the great Things he has done for us.

Our Histories will always remind us of the great Deliverances this Nation has had, and we cannot forget them; nor did the *Jews* forget the Wonders wrought in the Land of *Egypt*, and the Redemption of their *Ancestors* from *Captivity*. The historical Remembrance of the Facts *they had*; and *we have it*. The Charge against the *Jews* expressed frequently by their forgetting God, is the same which *St. Paul* brings against the heathen World: *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations; and their foolish Heart was darkened.*

Do we stand clear of this Charge? I wish to God we did.

Let not *me* be the Accuser of my Nation, but let every Man recollect what he has heard, and read, and seen, within the Com-  
pass



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pass of a few Years. Surely the Gospel of *Christ Jesus* was never treated with greater Malice and Contempt, by *Jews* or *Heathens*, than it has been in this *Christian* Country. Think not that I am condemning a sober Enquiry into the Truth of Religion: God forbid. But what shall we say, for the undisguised Profaneness, and even Blasphemy that has swarmed from the Press! Many Instances might be given; but *one* can never be forgotten; where the noblest and most exalted *Hymn* of *Christian* Devotion known to this *Church*, or any *Church* in the World, in which *Angels* and the blessed *Spirits* above join with us, has been perverted to the highest Impiety and Blasphemy, that ever the Wickedness or Malice of Man's Heart could conceive. This and other Crimes of the same Nature are indeed chargeable on the Authors: but how deplorable must the State of a Nation be, when Men find Encouragement to provide such Entertainment for the Publick?

Look into common Life, not to pry into the secret Faults of Men, but to see what is become of that Sense of Religion, which once animated the People. When *Popery* was breaking in upon us, our *Churches* were crowded;

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crowded; and unhappy was the Man, who by Sickness, or any real Necessity, was prevented in his Attendance in the House of the LORD. Is it so now? Is not *Sunday* become a Day of Diversion to the *Great Ones*, and a Day of Idleness and Laziness to the *Little Ones*? And has not this been manifestly followed by a great Increase of great Wickedness and Violence among the lower People? *Theft* and *Robbery*, which used to be secret Crimes, now appear armed in our *Streets*; and are supported by Numbers strong enough to defy the Power of the Magistrate. The unruly Passions of Men must be governed either by Force, or by Religion. Force cannot watch at all Doors to prevent further Mischief; but Religion is a *Centinel* placed in every Heart, to guard it against Wickedness; and it is but a natural Consequence for Men to grow violent and injurious to others, in Proportion as their Sense of Religion decays.

But amidst this Ruin of Virtue and Religion, one Thing there is, that still may be thought Matter of Comfort; that the *Nation* is generally averse to *Popery*: but it is some Abatement *even* to this Comfort, to consider that the Fear of *Popery* is not always

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ways a Concern for the Purity of the *Gospel*, but a Fear merely of the Powers of a *Popish Church*. Those who have the least Religion, and are grown wild with Notions of Liberty, have Reason to be apprehensive of ecclesiastical *Courts* and *Inquisitions* under the Direction of *Popery*. But in this there is no Virtue or Merit; though it may be perhaps an happy Circumstance at *present*, that there is *something* in *Popery*, for those to be afraid of, who have no Regard for Religion.

But in the mean Time has not *Popery* been daily getting Ground on us, by the artful and unregarded Insinuations of the *Adversary*; and by Applications of another Kind, which do indeed but little Honour to the *Converts*, or the *Converters*? The Price, at which a Man may sell the *Protestant* Religion, is become almost a stated and well known *Sum*; and there are known *Markets*, in which a Man may sell the *Faith* in which he was born and bred. Such new purchased Proselytes make no great *Figure*; for this Method indeed has no Effect, but upon the lowest People. And considering how improper an Application this is to the *Conscience*, there is Ground to suspect, that it is  
made



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made Use of rather to raise Recruits against a proper Time, than in Hopes to make real *Converts*. I wish they may not soon feel the Effects of this Management so long connived at.

But to return to ourselves: To prevent this, and whatever else we may apprehend from the Danger and Displeasure of God, let us seek the Lord in our Distress; and, by acknowledging our own Unworthiness, and the Abuse of former Mercies, render ourselves Objects of his Goodness and Forgiveness. We have but too exactly copied the Behaviour of the *Jews* in their Days of Prosperity; let us learn of them likewise in their Adversity, and cry unto God for Help against our Enemies. Let us set a due Value upon the Blessings bestowed on us, and walk worthy of the Light of the Gospel which has shone among us; that our Conduct and Behaviour may bear Testimony to the Truth which we profess.

And as in all the Dispensations of Providence towards us, it is expected from us, that we should make Use of the Means which God hath put in our Power, for our own Defence and Safety; let us on this Occasion with Cheerfulness, and the Hearts of

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Men



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Men who trust in God, be ready to employ our *Persons* and our *Fortunes* in the Defence of our KING and COUNTRY, and the *happy Constitution* in Church and State, under which we live. Let every Man do his Part: he who can do least, can pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*. Every Man may reform One, that is himself, and fill up perhaps that Number of the Righteous, for the Sake of which the *City* may be saved.

In a Word, the Time calls upon us to be serious; to think of GOD, and of OURSELVES; and, according to the Advice of the Psalmist, with which I shall dismiss you, *to stand in Awe and sin not, to commune with our own Heart, and in our Chamber, and be still; to offer the Sacrifice of Righteousness, and to put our Trust in the LORD.*

FINIS.

CMC

MVSEVM

BRITANNICVM